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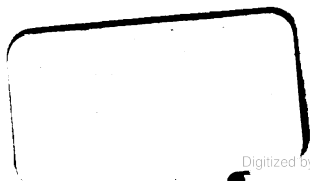
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THE DEVIL'S PARABLES

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**FRANCISCUS CANONICUS WYNDHAM,
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THE DEVIL'S PARABLES

AND OTHER ESSAYS

BY

JOHN HANNON

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**TO THE
RIGHT REV. MONSIGNOR PATRICK FENTON**

**LORD BISHOP OF ARMYCLA, PROVOST AND VICAR-GENERAL OF THE
DIOCESE OF WESTMINSTER, AND AUXILIARY BISHOP TO
HIS GRACE THE ARCHBISHOP OF WESTMINSTER**

**THESE PAGES ARE INSCRIBED
WITH DEEP RESPECT AND AFFECTIONATE MEMORIES
OF HIS LORDSHIP'S PRESIDENCY AT ST. EDMUND'S
IN THE HAPPY LUSTRUM**

1882—1887

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INTRODUCTORY

TOM GRIFFIN was a quiet man, who dwelt in the "Hundreds" at Brentford. My personal memories of Tom are fast fading. I seem to recall a tall stooped man of forty, with a dark, oval, priest-like face. But he passed out of my life before I reached my teens; also my people dwelt some miles from the historic town of the "Three Kings," and of the battle in the Civil War. Suffice it that I now know him intimately from talks with the "old neighbours," of whom I was privileged to give some account to readers of a book called "The Kings and the Cats." They were Famine emigrants, mostly from Munster, and settled towards 1851 in Brentford, Isleworth, and Mortlake—orchard-towns in the Valley of the Thames.

Tom was a "quiet" man. Every Corkonian of his day pronounced the word in one syllable—"quite." Tom Griffin went further. He could not manage the sound of *qu*, but made a *k* of it, as do the French. Thus Tom, in his vernacular, was a "kite" man. He was also one in reality—a tranquil, easy-going, pious bachelor, who avoided disturbances with his neighbours, as the devil dodges holy water. Being such, most Irishmen (and nearly

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all Irishwomen) will at once understand the seeming paradox that Tom had borne arms in the insurrectionary movement of '48, had returned to have his fling on the hillside with the Fenians in '67, and retained to his dying day a venerable musket well kept and well oiled. It hung beneath a crucifix over his mantelpiece, flanked by pictures of St. Patrick and of Lord Edward Fitzgerald.

He had—though the humblest of Mass-going men—a certain consciousness of this virtue of serenity. "I'm a *kite* man," he would say, whatever happened of a ruffling nature. "Yes, yes ; I'm a kite man." It became a byword in exiled families along the valley. In our own little household, when I was in youthful tantrums, I was advised by my father to become "a kite man,"* like Tom Griffin of the "Hundreds."

A word about these "Hundreds," in which so many of the Famine exiles lived. One hardly knows whether to use the singular or plural in speaking of them—or it. Brentford still has its "butts," and a prosperous convent, giving work to many a Catholic laundress, now flourishes in the broad space

* Tom Griffin's mispronunciation of the sound *qu* reminds me of a Charles Reade story, which will be new to many. Reade could not pronounce the letter *s*, but substituted for it the sound *gh*, as heard in the Irish word "lough." My friend the late Mr. David Christie Murray was bantering Reade one day on the amount of extracts from Blue-Books and histories with which he overloaded his extraordinary novels. The retort of the author of "Hard Cash" has always struck me as one of the ablest defences of the higher plagiarism. "I may milk a thousand cowgh [a thousand cows] into my pail," he said, "but the butter I churn igh my own!"

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once given up to archery. The "Hundreds"—a squat quadrangle of solid Georgian cottages—no longer exist. They have been bought up and built over with trim pseudo-villas—red-brick boxes with slated lids. Antiquaries used to worry about the name, I am told. We read of the "hundred" of this place and that in Domesday Book, but why the name of "Hundreds" as applied to a rectangular patch of ground enclosed by houses in a biggish market-town which must have been of some importance even in the days of William the Norman? However this may be, the "Hundreds" were a very cosy, old-world quarter as I remember them, with a strong contingent of their English and Protestant aborigines dwelling in one half of the square, and a yet larger colony of Irish "neighbours" on the other.

At the far corner to the right, and just opposite you as you emerged from the bricked archway leading into the "Hundreds," was the house where Tom Griffin lodged. In the room on the ground-floor were the pictures, the crucifix—and the musket, which report declared to contain a gill of powder and a whole egg-cupful of shot. It was not hard for small boys to gain an awed glimpse of these treasures, for the front-door, opening immediately on the "living-room," was mostly open during the day when the *vanithee* was in and out, doing the household work for her family and her lodgers (one other, I think, beside the "kite man").

And in the warmer evenings, after his day's work, Tom Griffin would sit at the open door smoking his pipe till twilight thickened into dark. Then he

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would retire, leaving the door half-open for ventilation, and say his rosary before the crucifix over the mantel.

None disturbed him, though all saw him. Need it be written that Tom's nightly prayer, with either closed or open door, was the simplest matter of course to the "neighbours"? As to the rest—the Englishry—they had become a kindly folk by the seventies, and there were serious shindies only on certain nights, when the trouble (however annoying to a man of Tom's "kite" temperament) was purely alcoholic and internecine, and (at any rate, in my memory) but seldom racial and religious, or in any way directed against their Irish fellow-dwellers as such.

But at times, on pay-nights, these British bricklayers' labourers *did* fight, and most furiously, amongst themselves. And there were Bank Holidays, too, and—worst of all—there were Sunday evenings. Tom's patience was often exhausted, and he would close his door and bolt it, telling odd combatants, who surged almost into his room, that he was a quiet man. "Yes, I'm a kite man." And then, sorely perturbed over his distraction, he would resume the interrupted mystery.

One Saturday night a battle royal raged in the "Hundreds" such as English or Irish memory could not recall since the later fifties. Irishmen—perhaps the worst peacemakers in the world when the din of battle is toward—imprudently rushed in to separate "brickie" from "brickie," and infuriated spouse from spouse. The racket, I was told by an eyewitness, was terrific. One could scarcely hear one-

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self think, as Americans put it. Tom closed his door, and knelt again by the rush-bottomed chair, his beads in hand. Suddenly cries from the surging groups without—shriller in their quality and accent than those from the more stolid British gladiators—warned him that the “peacemakers” had been drawn into the fray that was not of their making. Ireland was involved. Irishmen were giving *pol-thogues*, doubtless spurred thereto by the “redding blows” which are the peacemaker’s lot all the world over, as well as in Scotland,* whence the phrase comes. Tom Griffin arose, disposed reverently of his beads, and took down the aged musket from the mantelpiece. At any rate, all evidence points to his having done so, for my eye-witnesses’ narratives simply pick him up at the point when he appeared outside his door, minus the rosary, but levelling his gun at the thickest of the fight.

“I’m a kite man,” he said—(“rather pale in the face,” I have been assured)—“I’m a kite man. But, begor, boys, here’s Limerick!”

And he fired. There was a blinding flash and a terrific report. The *vantihee*, or Tom himself, had mercifully drawn the slugs, as it proved, but I am assured on all hands that the bang was magnificent. The windows of the “Hundreds” rattled. An English officer, to whom I have told the story, assures me that by all the “rules of war” the old Fenian powder, caked and hardened in years of toasting over the mantelpiece, should have split the

* Sir Walter Scott calls them “redding-straiks,” and mentions a Highland superstition which makes them the deadliest of wounds.

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barrel, and blown Tom's honest head off. But nothing of the kind befell. The tough old musket stood the strain, and when Tom's face emerged radiant from the wreaths of smoke enshrouding it, the arena of the "Hundreds" was void and silent.

"Limerick," muttered Tom, with much satisfaction, putting the emblem of Fatherland back on the hooks, and taking the beads of his Faith once more between his fingers. "Limerick!"

And when my main informant emerged from behind the pump, where he had wisely taken cover while a '48 to '67 musket was playing upon the just and the unjust in the "Hundreds," the quadrangle was as bare of combatants "as a frog of feathers," and Tom Griffin was peacefully engrossed in his beads. Blessed are the peacemakers—even if they do lose their tempers once in a while.

* * * * *

Like excellent Tom Griffin, the writer of this book is by predilection a quiet man. Some of his friends will be much surprised at his touching the fiercely debated questions of the hour at all. Three reasons must make an apology.

In the first place, our Holy Father the Pope is calling on all Catholic lay-writers who have been trained to make use of the pen, and has repeatedly urged them onward in the battle of the books and the Press. He has bidden them fear not and shrink not, but do their utmost, no matter how humble their literary equipment, so only this last be loyal to Christ, and adapted to present needs.

In the second place, when that wonderful new Catholic monthly, the *Magnificat*, was started in

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America about two years ago,* and the editor required a series of essays such as those now set forth, the author's name was recommended (unknown to himself) by an American Jesuit Father of literary distinction and an Irish poet of the highest eminence.

Finally, when the "official" letter came, the author discovered that the magazine thus honouring him was conducted by the Sisters of Mercy, to whom no man of Irish race who has read Gerald Griffin can ever refuse a request.

Such is the story of the birth of "The Devil's Parables," and the papers that follow it. Their success in America has rather dazed me, for I was brought up in a harsh school of journalism, where every employé, from office-boy to editor-in-chief, was made by proprietors to consider himself an unprofitable cogwheel, not worth the oil his use and existence demanded. Some messages from a kind American Bishop and his priests, elicited by these essays, have gone far towards encouraging me, and even making me share their hope that England may accord the little book a measure of the welcome assured it in the land of its first appearance.

Yet Catholic England, and perhaps most of all its exiguous circle of book-buyers, looks askance upon "the new man"—the *novus homo*. Who shall blame her? She is aged, and prefers what is old and known. But America welcomes the younger man with all his faults, and accepts his work and gives him heart of grace, and generous praise—of

* It may be procured regularly through the publishers of this book.

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course, on a repairing lease. For Catholic America is young, and we must praise her in this—that, being new, she would renew all things in Christ, according to the motto of Pius the Tenth.

* * * * *

Here, then, I commit my book to critics and to readers, saying only to them: "Boys, I'm a *kite* man, but, begor, here's Limerick!" Now the stronghold in whose honour I am firing a musket is not the illustrious and unsullied city of Irish warfare, but the *cælestis urbs Jerusalem*, the "blessed vision of peace" reared on high, the Church of Christ, one, holy, Catholic, apostolic and inerrant. To her judgment I affectionately submit every sentence of a book which endeavours to defend perennial truths, without always disdaining the modish jargon of those who seek to impugn them.

JOHN HANNON.

ISLEWORTH,
July 12, 1909.

THE DEVIL'S PARABLES

I

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"BUT truth embodied in a tale shall enter in at lowliest doors." So sang Lord Tennyson in his mild, mid-Victorian act of faith, the *In Memoriam*. From the beginning the apologue and the fable, the similitude and the story, have served as vehicles for the common wisdom of man. Ages before the Wisdom of God "leapt down from His royal throne . . . when all things were in quiet silence, and the night was in the midst of her course," the power of the parable was known.

Scorning none of the things He had made ; clothing Himself, indeed, with our infirmity, Our Lord embodied the eternal truths in tales that have renewed the face of the earth.

The Devil, who was a liar from the beginning, had long centuries to wait before he could widely diffuse the poisoned parable. Even when books were first printed it was impossible for any man to attack God and His Christ in romances, because Europe was still wholly Catholic in the memorable year 1460.

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It was not till the very vigil of the German Revolt that Rabelais could issue from the press those pitifully licentious allegories of Gargantua and Pantagruel which an English publisher once smugly informed me "rendered a French Reformation possible." I say "smugly" because verbatim translations of certain portions of the stuff are seizable by the English police to this hour. Yet the man was right. A day came to France when Calvinists could build upon Rabelais' foundations of salacity, wit, much misapplied learning, and animal hatred of Rome.

They call it a comedy of derivation that the words "dynasty" and "dynamite" should arise from the one Greek root. Is it not a tragedy that the Huguenots, or French *Puritans*, should vaunt of their tainted source, and that even Coleridge, the unsullied singer of "Christabel," seems to applaud them in his "Table Talk"? "You may laugh," he said to Lamb, "but I could preach you sermons from Rabelais." No wonder Lamb laughed.

Prose fiction in English-speaking lands has purged itself throughout the intervening centuries from most unveiled impurity. The novel, our modern parable, is no longer indiscriminately and with justice denounced from all pulpits, and has become a need of life to millions. Young people read it for pleasure, for the happiness of facile tears, for—it may be—the *frissons voluptueux* that come when their cosiness is confronted by imaginary woe. The middle-aged seek it as a mild narcotic. The aged turn to it as an emollient—almost as a lubricant, when the race is nigh run, and the chariot-wheels grate harshly.

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In these pages we have no concern with the best work of the nobler English and American writers outside the Church, any more than with the absolutely invaluable productions of our own little phalanx within. Making these superb exceptions, it is simple truth to say that the legacy of Luther trails through thousands of novels that readily pass the placid censorship of Mrs. Grundy. Luther was a vulgarian of genius, who contrived to make comfort, and not character, the life-ideal of Teuton peoples. Indeed, were he Lucifer's natural son, as over his riotous cups he often proclaimed, he could not better have fulfilled the behests of his father. Nothing could well be more Beelzebubic (to steal a word from a witty priest I know) than to persuade the supersentimental that the Beatitudes of the Mount are poems in theory and miseritutes in practice. That is what Luther (*né* "Luder"; *germanicè* "carrión") did. And that is what most of the marrying-and-giving-in-marriage fables of the circulating libraries have done ever since, as perhaps their oral prototypes did in that spell of earliest paganism, "the days before the Deluge."

For the pseudo-Reformation was essentially an upheaval of paganism, of a *bourgeois* heathendom with no place for the Vestals of old Rome, or even the asceticism of Sparta and the *stadion*. Socially, economically, politically, it was a series of Jobs. Religiously it was nothing—a no-thing, indeed, or negation, and thus without theological existence. And to think it was based upon Bible-and-Bible-Onlyism! Never again may the Devil "cite Scripture to his purpose" so literally, so effectively.

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King Bible-and-Bible-Only is dead, having turned destructive critic and sawn off the bough whereon he sat. "Le roi est mort ; vive le roi !" What Amurath is being sent from *là-bas* to succeed him, please goodness not for three centuries, though Schlegel and others seem to think this the allotted span of heresies ? One turns to the later Devil's Parables for a clue.

Many of these that have come my way for professional notice seem to point to a Christless Socialism as the new means by which *l'antico avversaro* would rend the Seamless Robe. Others go further and point onward to the coming of red-handed anarchy—a consummation Satan must devoutly wish, for is he not Lord of Misrule itself, and his kingdom the City of Confusion ? If his subtle surmise through parabolizing fountain-pens come true, then the reign of mad Nietzsche's Over-Man may follow. The Church might convert the all-mastering *Uebermensch*, unless the final days were at hand, and the creature proved to be Antichrist. But if he became a Charlemagne, or so much as a Constantine, the dim and common multitudes could turn to the Papacy and sue, not unheard, for a Way, a Truth, and a Life.

Yet although much Socialism is being preached in fiction, I doubt me if the Devil will advance along fictional lines* so long as woman, lovely or no,

* The swift flame of Socialism scarce needs any fiction-fuel. Its fires are overstocked as it is with what Manning called "the callousness of employers, and the greed of unrestrained competition." Hear Father Joseph Rickaby, S.J., on this : "To parody a famous saying, property is

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continues to be the mainstay of industrious novelists. "Gigadibs, the literary man," will never win woman, charm he never so wisely, to yearn for State-made hats, or for the uniform price, at a uniform bargain counter, of uniform Government chiffons. Woman holds with Mr. Upton Sinclair in the matter of beef ; her sympathy fails when it comes to common weal. Boys and youths who are prigs—"small animals overfed for their size," Lord Morley says—suffer most from the Socialist parable. Male adults, too, are easy game for its materialistic teaching, when they have been over-educated for their intellects, have failed as a consequence in life, and are hungry week in, week out. Poor fellows ! they do not buy books ; they borrow them in the free shelter and warmth of public libraries. Now woman purchases or, at the lowest, subscribes. So there is little more than a trickle of well-written Socialistic fiction. The few women I know who have praised Utopian parables spoke of them in chastened tones. They seemed to have made a much-advertised "cycle bargain." One gleaned that the tyres and accessories pleased, while the frame was out in the woodshed. In less commercial language, the vivid

now on its trial. If the existence of Dives is a benefit to Lazarus, according to the order of Nature, then well and good. Dives may be converted, and maintained in his estate ; but if his existence is a benefit to no one but himself, so much the worse for Dives in the time that is coming on the earth. Lazarus can read ; he has had some education ; he can think ; and he does think the division of this world's goods between himself and Dives desperately unfair, and in his weakness he growls to his comrades in misery : ' We will right this injustice some day. ' "

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descriptions of life among the poor were relished, while the doctrinaire dialogue was skipped.

Always remembering that women are the great readers and buyers of stories, it seems to me that the Devil's main attack at present upon the faith and hope of the leisured classes consists in a fictional effort to replace Christianity by Esoteric Buddhism, Spiritism, Theosophy, Karma, "Higher Thought," and the like; forms of a sensuous, picturesque, almost pyrotechnic Pantheism which, denying personality to God, and post-mortem identity to the soul, holds the sinner unindictable for sin.

Just listen to the language of the heroine of one of these tales, and draw a long breath when you reach the sentence I have italicized. It contains the whole pith of the 330 pages of this particular product of the Fabrique de Romans, Maison Satan et Cie.

"And sorrows, my own and those I see and hear of around me, I can bear now without bitterness, and vice and crime and pain: *since man is not a pawn of the Deity, but potential God, treading in many selves a winding way back to Himself*; since sin is not defiance of the good, but a slow wearing out of the grosser nature, the passing through the bondage of which is necessary to omniscience [!!], since," etc.

The author of this sad fudge is cleverish, and a woman. She is not the first of her sex to hearken to the whisper: "You shall not die the death; you shall be as Gods, knowing good and evil."

Many English writers with a hearing are preaching this oldest and newest of Lies, but the men amongst

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them—to their shame be it spoken—have not the brute courage of evil conviction displayed by the women. Such male romancers and writers of Lamb-like plaintive essays are disingenuous, and thus doubly to be dreaded. They contrive to be heretics against the tenets of even latitudinarian Anglicanism without losing social caste. Insular “Modernists,” they manage to be proselytizers as Fénelon would have wise men to be witty—“*comme par mégarde, et sans y songer.*” The seeds they sow fall from hands that always put something in the plate; the words they speak come from lips that still sing “Ancient and Modern.”

But this particular book is frank. Here, for instance, is a passage which truthfully saddles the Protestantism of the writer's upbringing with the blame of her present unbelief:

“For I never, even in the darkest days, conceived existence as possible without God; the idea of an absolute negation of God was unthinkable, as I believe it is unthinkable for most people: there is always Law or a First Cause, or the Unknowable, something that he writes with a capital letter, in every man's mind. But God, as He had been shown to me, was more of a bugbear than a deity, and I turned from His altar; Christianity—Protestant, orthodox Christianity, as I had been taught it—was full of inconsistencies, and I cast it from me. For it told me to believe at one period of the world's history in events of an entirely miraculous character, and for ever after and all over the world to disbelieve and abhor anything in the shape of miracle, despite all evidence, however apparently reasonable, that

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attested it. It told me that the highest part of man was destined for another world than this ; that in that world, a supernatural one, the only true happiness, the only reality, was to be found ; and then that any experience which touched the supernatural, any awakening of a subtler consciousness in man, was in one's own case imaginary, any proof of such experiences in the cases of others was fraudulent. It told me that God was a spirit, and must be worshipped in spirit, yet bound me down to a particular letter, and to a particular interpretation of that letter."

The full Divine light, of which the better sects still conserve some broken gleams, held no attraction for her restlessness. She speaks of the Church thus, with patronage :

" The Roman Catholic Church was more spiritual in its conceptions, I thought, than Protestant Christianity, though its symbolism was more admittedly concrete ; and more consistent with its professions of belief in the daily recognition of a life and powers beyond and greater than the earthly life and the physical possibilities. Yet it, too, seemed to me to put belief before life, to make creed more important than character ; it, too, said there was but one way to God, and that one the way bordered by its own dogmas."

This cocksure pretty writing is pretty bad because pretty ignorant. The lady dismisses Catholicism in a dozen lines, and one cannot but think of the monoglot Iron Duke's conversation with the Allies, her tone is so British. " Comment M. le Duc de Vilainton parle-t-il le français ?" one of the

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Allied Sovereigns was asked after the peace negotiations. "Avec courage," was the judicious reply.

Boswell reports a pardonably coarse phrase of Johnson's apropos of the sceptics of their day. The blunt old believer declared that these men were too proud to resemble the rest of mankind, who get their milk from cows. Unbelievers must be novel, at all costs. "So, sir," he exclaimed, "they are off to milk the bull." The imported Brahminical animal whom the heroine of the novel before me consults can give her no better prescription for spiritual earthquakes than that craze of the latter-day cliques, the theory of reincarnation. And with this she is fain to be content as the curtain drops and the lights go down.

It were amusing but for one Satanic fact. Reincarnation, as preached in this and many worse-written novels, condones all sin—nay, holds that the sinner must purge himself of it by sinning, as wine clarifies its substance in the vat by poisonous eructations. It is no raising of the voice to a shriek to say that there speaks Hell.

Another danger. Writers of this class are careful not to unmask their Buddhistic or similar batteries till the third act of the drama holds the stage, and readers are engrossed in the story. Thus the unwary, and especially the "unlearned and the unstable" of whom the first Pope speaks in his second epistle, are entrapped into yielding up their imaginations in sympathetic response to subtle, almost imperceptible blasphemy, while the reasoning faculties, narcotized by the charms of hero or heroine, are all unprepared for the ambush some pages later.

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Of all the perils of the Devil's Parables, this is the chiefest. A lie, well embedded, rather than embodied, in a tale wins through the very keyhole of the mental door.

See how Renan succeeded where Strauss and Baur had failed! The Breton took their dry, rationalistic theories and clothed them with all hues of rainbow language in the pictorial tale he calls the "*Vie de Jésus.*" I suppose this work of a Voltaire *sucré* has done more to de-Christianize France than anything printed since the Encyclopédistes themselves were writing. I saw some copies of it not long ago, stacked up in front of a dubious London bookshop. They were flanked to the one hand by the "*Confessions of Maria Monk,*" to the other by obscene pamphlets. May a book, like a man, be known by the company it keeps? I think so. *Noscitur a sociis.*

And I think also (since the essay form gives licence for such egoism of surmise) that "reincarnation" is like to prove the "creed" of all creedless women. I have quotations to support this view, but, with Walter Pater, most people will find it "pleasant and even helpful not to read them." Let them go by the board.

Besides, reincarnation is only a bubo of the plague. It is rather a deathly symptom than the whole pestilence itself. Spiritism is a yet more loathly adjunct of the complication, and is ardently preached in many a parable. Most of us remember how a poor man fell prostrate in tears at Father Bernard Vaughan's feet in the great preacher's room at Farm Street, and begged him in God's name to "stop this

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devilry at work amongst us." His wife had just been taken to an asylum, driven mad by Spiritism. Indeed, this "devilry at work amongst us," this Thing, this Legion-Lie, is so much easier to recognize than to label that the Holy Father himself prefers to call it a "synthesis of all heresies" when dealing with its parade as "Modernism" among a certain group of Catholic lay professors, with a sprinkling of priests among them. Called by whatever name, it teaches what Lucifer was blasted for ambitioning—the equality of the creature with God. When the serpent first whispered it in the Garden, he induced original sin. Though the play upon words be poor, he is hardly original now. His subtle, chained intellect would seem to have roamed full circle. He is now repeating himself.

And to think that the laws of Christian lands allow anyone to print whatsoever the Tempter repeats! To think that the worst penalty incurred by doing this, not in squat treatises read by none, but in romances written for the million, is—to be interviewed!

For the Devil's parabolists themselves we may say at times the prayer, *Et pro Paganis*, that the Church offers up year by year on the Day of Crucifixion. But we must not read their books. Theirs is a sort that cometh not out save by prayer and fasting, especially the latter. All Catholics except those professionally called into the dissecting-room to examine this literature should—nay, simply *must*—abstain from it. It is fetid enough beneath the scalpel, and to nostrils well inured, but to use it as daily food——!

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Faith rests on impregnable grounds, most certainly. "Nihil certioribus innititur principiis," taught the ninth Pius, of very holy memory. But faith is also a supernatural virtue, like chastity, and, like it, may be lost against light, though all arguments in both worlds be for it :

"Give thanks to God for all the gracious things
That wit has woven, or that genius sings ;
The pure alone is beautiful ; refrain
Your eyes from all that might the memory stain."

Thus Father Matthew Russell, S.J., in the sweet "Idyls of Killowen." "The pure alone is beautiful." So is the true, for purity and truth are one, and our God is a God of truth. No Catholic who studies and thinks and prays need ever fear to encounter the most seeming-strong of purely *intellectual* objections to the faith. He must not needlessly *court* them, lest, loving the danger, he perish, or at best give scandal by foolhardiness. But when they arise, he is commanded by St. Peter himself, the first of a long line of supposed suppressors of intellect, to "give a reason for the hope that is in him."

Controversy is one thing ; temptation is another. The temptation of the "lie embodied in a tale" does not arise from its intellectual power, which is often pitifully to seek. It makes no frontal assault on that "divinity and God-like reason" which should never "rust in us unused," as Shakespeare taught, in strict accordance with the lessons learnt at a Catholic mother's knee. Its oblique attack on reason is intended to destroy our faith insidiously, by pictorially affecting that *phantasia sensitiva* which is

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rather of the body than of the soul, as we know in dreams, in illness, and in certain states of health. " Pins," said the little boy in his " general knowledge " paper, " is very wholesome, by reason of your not eating them." So with the Devil's Parables. They are already ecclesiastically prohibited—yes. But so, by the secular arm, is a diet of pins, and I wish to thrust home the point that the prohibition in either case is wise, is kind, is maternally solicitous in enactment, and is " pleasant and helpful " to obey. Failing abstinence, how many of us will desert when the battle breaks ! Some of the wisest heads* now think that it is nigh upon us—even at the gates, far closer than when the Cardinal foresaw it in that lovely chapter of " Marzio's Crucifix." And its advent is acclaimed, with new squeals of " Ecrasons l'infame " in the modern and modernistic *romans à thèse* that I have ventured to call " The Devil's Parables."

* " One of the greatest persecutions that ever swept over the Church is preparing in Europe. The Church must get ready to meet it. Therefore God has forewarned it by the appearance of Modernism, the harbinger of irreligion. This persecution may last until the passing of Materialism. After the storm has abated, the Church will be hailed as a welcome ally of a new, young, and vigorous idealism."—Dr. J. Godrycz, in " Doctrine of Modernism and its Reformation." Philadelphia : John Joseph McVey.

II

THE COMING RACE

ONE of the reviews has a woeful article on the growth of juvenile crime in Europe. The shrewd, anonymous writer takes the statistics and puts them through the arithmetical mill; adds up, subtracts, divides, and multiplies *à ravir*. It is when he comes to factorize, to grope for the very *n*th root of this sad new Tree of Knowledge, that he and I part company. I have pitched him aside and allowed memory to carry me back to "old faces, other minds"; among them the figure of one who would be surprised indeed that words of his should ever be seen in print.

He was a servant in the college refectory, one of those step-and-fetch-its whom we called, collectively, "Potts"; individually, too, when their proper names escaped us.

Half of his patronymic always did. An elderly Fleming, he hailed from that part of Vlaanderen where they ever speak Vlaamsch, and Christianly try to forget whatever of Pagan French they are made to pick up in the army. His name began with "Van." I think it ended with "Hoven." Betwixt the two came a plash and roar of syllables, like the

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opening of sluices at Bruges, or the beaching of yawls at Heyst.

Have you seen, by the way, those deckless Norman galleys his countrymen fish from? Their flotillas in the channel, with russet sails set squarely on single masts, all crimson in the sunset, give one a picture of William the Conqueror invading Harold's England. So a Belgian priest-antiquary tells me, at least, and I take it he ought to know.

We boys did not know how to manage a name like the swirling back-drag of an ebb-tide on the foreshore. So we called its owner Sweeny.

The college of Sweeny's employment was an English one, in the heart of an English shire. Many priests, then as now, were wont to make their Annual Retreat within its walls, what time the students had fled for the holidays. One year a French priest joined his English and Irish brethren in seeking this truce of God. A poor man, and an unworldly, he had for all savings in this world a single French *billet de banque* worth forty pounds. This he folded like a pipe-lighter, and marked his Breviary withal. When retreat was over, and this simple "Abbé Constantin" of true life came to pack, the costly marker had vanished.

All efforts failed to retrieve it. Our open-handed President lent its loser all money he required, and there the matter seemed to end; after the usual distressing interrogatories of servants, among them Sweeny. Luckily none was even vaguely suspected.

For long after his departure the priest's bedroom was sedulously ransacked, and both church and sacristy were "turned out" as if compilers of a

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benign *inventaire* were at work. In vain. The affair remained a mystery.

And such it continued for I know not how many months, or it may be years. We juniors were told nothing.

At length I heard the tale and its sequel. But first a word of explanation.

When it became your turn to read aloud in the refectory of my Alma Mater, your dinner was deferred till your much-enduring auditors had eaten and been filled. You fed alone in the solitude of the great room, and Sweeny was your major-domo. If you spoke him fair, he could improve the menu. For the professors had just dined—with the students, it is true, but rather less austere.

One summer's day full twenty years ago, I then being reader of the week, good Sweeny of the Silver Breeches was radiant as he helped me to soup. (His garments came always from Vlaanderen, where they make iridescent grey cloths that shimmer like herring-shoals.) The smile in Sweeny's eyes outshone the splendour of his raiment.

Unbesought, and in a twinkling, the professorial baked meats were made to "coldly furnish forth" the alumnar table. Then Sweeny drew a stool at civil distance, and began to speak his joy.

After telling me what has been written concerning the priest's lost money, he very soon opened the brighter chapter.

He—Sweeny—had found that money yesterday, and had taken it forthwith to the President's room. Nay, more: Monsignor had telegraphed the good news to M. le Curé—still in England, by good hap—

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and had received to-day a grateful reply, promising a tithe of the found gold to Sweeny.

The narrow ribbon of folded thin paper had tumbled from the Breviary to the floor of the choir-stalls, and thence been swept or blown through the grating of the hot-water apparatus. Workmen were overhauling this during the week, and Sweeny had made it his business to grope amid the dust and litter beneath the now accessible heating tubes. There he had found the note, grimy but intact. The Bank of France was the poorer and a poor priest the richer by a thousand francs, or—since he so willed it—nine hundred.

I suggested the danger the money had run of being found and stolen by one of the strange London workmen. Sweeny said charitably that men were very much what their parents made them, and fell to talking of his father, a just man, who had taught his children the way of the Commandments in word and work.

They lived *en plein pays* some eight miles east of Ghent, when the last century was young. The father (we may call him Vanhoven with respect, if not exactitude) was a day-labourer and cottier. Though a widower, he made time every morning to prepare his children for their three-mile trudge to school, and to hear their catechism in the evening. I seem to see him, through the misty patois, sitting book in hand, and smoking the while a great porcelain pipe of peace.

Our servant, the youngest of the children, was six when he received from his father a certain lesson on the Seventh Commandment. I transcribe it because

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I think it redolent of that atmosphere of the Flemish fireside which Henrik Conscience has preserved for all time in his books. Its robust Catholicism, too, in days when the prisons of uncatechized Europe are bulging with boy-thieves, is even as one of those *parfums de Rome* that Veuillot so loved to contrast with the *odeurs de Paris*.

It was the fall of the year. Over-ripe apples were tumbling everywhere in the pleasant garths around them. Not far from the school the young Vanhovens attended, about a league away, a tall apple-tree adjoining a farmstead overhung the road they travelled—one of those sinister ammunition-ways, paved with square stones to bear artillery-wheels, that show what Napoleon made Belgium—the battlefield of Europe.

All elder small Vanhovens knew that "Thou shalt not steal" implies, also, "Thou shalt not take, unpermitted, even what might be thine for the asking." My Vanhoven as yet held otherwise, and filled vast Flemish pockets one day with fruit that had fallen overnight.

Some apples remained to him when he came home that evening. With *bona fides* he produced them after supper, and began to munch.

"Where gottest thou these?" asked the father.

Misgivings seized the boy, and he was mute.

His father set down his pipe and reached for the family rod. In Catholic Bavaria this reposes by the hearth, in a deep slender jar, filled with brine to keep it limber. In Belgium they hang it on the wall.

There was still no answer, and good Vanhoven put down the switch, and pleaded with the child. When

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it came out whose tree had borne the fruit, the father rose, donned sabots and accordion-pleated cap, and took his son by the hand,

“Come, little one,” he said. “Thou and I will go and restore these. It is late, and there is no moon, or I would send thee alone. If the farmer be awake, thou shalt come with me and beg his pardon. To-night thou must beg pardon of the good God. I shall not beat thee, child; this lesson will teach thee enough.”

Away they fared through the warm shadows, heavy with the incense of harvest, but so black that the child was glad when the outskirts of the town were neared. The farmer was abed, and so, when the remaining apples had been meticulously placed where their brothers had lain in the morning, the two of them came home.

Now while I listened to these things and approved, I was eating good pasty that had not been baked for my palate. Thus the morality of the tale seemed austere no less than beautiful. Comrades to whom I repeated it shared the view. Others—of Irish birth—had similar tales to tell of their own upbringing. Yet others—but these were few and insular—opined that “this kind of thing” was probably good for foreigners. The broad Anglo-Saxon lines of the British nursery, they maintained, bred the most honest men in the world.

Over twenty years have sped since penniless Sweeny kept smiling to himself because he had retrieved a poor man's savings. The coming race is knocking at the doors, and over-early statistics show that its fathers were hardly Vanhovens. Have the

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"simple moral lessons" of British and other nurseries, kindergartens, and primary State schools—so simple that they need the great names of Froebel and Pestalozzi to distinguish them from copy-book truisms—have such ethical lessons produced moral crops in proportion to the millions they cost?

Gaol-governors think not. Our reviewer—in the corner yonder—thinks not. And magistrates of all lower courts in Europe know not what to think. They are mostly like the reviewer, and have loosed moorings with Christianity. They can thus prescribe no remedy. How should they, with this for sole commandment: "Thou shalt not be found out"? They and theirs, of course, and all statesmen and bureaucrats, maintain the abstract beauty of demeanour that fears no finding out. Well, then, messieurs, one may ask, is not the ugliness of the reverse a sin against God, as well as against Society? No, you will be assured, while your hosts inwardly strike you off their visiting-list as a "clerical"—no, it is bad enough as it is, for the upkeep of criminals is expensive, but it is not a sin against God. After all, they will add, modern thought has shown that God does not exist, or, if He does, is either too nebulous to know or too mighty to care for the misfeasance of insects *ici-bas*.

Calvinism was a pretty bad form of unfaith, with no more knowledge of the love of the Sacred Heart than the Koran or the Upanishad. But it knew better than this. Vicious splinter of a dead branch of the Church as it was, it kept emptier gaols than these pundits who deny sin with one hand, and wonder why they must found children's courts with

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the other. My able reviewer—their spokesman—leaves the Catholic mind tenderer than of yore to the Puritan nursery jingle :

“ It is a sin

To steal a pin :

Much more to steal a greater thing.”

I could almost write its *apologia* now, as thus : Only the cheapness of wire-manufacture has stultified the adage, which once was true and wholesome. Its rhymes may halt ; not so its theology. This, indeed, is somewhat notably Catholic, as indicating the distinction between venial and mortal sin that Calvinists denied. An individual modern pin is financially so worthless that the principle *parvulum pro nihilo habetur* holds good ; interpretative consent for its annexation may (with only one exception) be presumed ; and therefore such annexation is sinless. The exception is not of practical importance to the pin-stealer, the case contemplated being that in which the pin belongs to a lady, and is in use and *in situ*. Its abstraction would thus cause *grave incommodum*, and be blameworthy in the measure of the lady's indignation. But in olden days pins both cost and were counted. “ Pin-money ” was an item in the bridal dower. Broadly speaking, then, though it is not a sin to steal a pin, it used to be.

Would, however, that those excellent ancestresses had chosen for the burden of their lay an article that had not cheapened into insignificance ! For there is not enough Gospel in present-day nursery-rhymes to “ save the soul of a cock-robin,” as a Yorkshire parson said of his Archbishop's sermons.

A good priest among my friends, who has Homes

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for Destitute Boys sheltering a thousand waifs, told me once that he calculated to cure lying in three years, but that never in his experience had he cured a bad case of pilfering. He left me to infer that the cure, or rather prevention, must be Mother's work to begin with.

If such be the green wood, what of the dry? What of the children—the coming race—outside the Church? Statistics show. And why? It is this that our annoying reviewer deliberately blinks. Yet the youngest of indulgent Catholic readers can tell him. The precious spirit of the age—one of haste, competition, and pleasure-seeking—has in practice no less than in theory deleted the words “I am the Lord thy God” from the Decalogue. Destroying thus all sanction for the Commandments, it has shivered the Two Tables more irreplaceably than ever Moses at the foot of Sinai.

The false prophets of this materialism have money, and are educated. They have no temptation to steal a cent. The future of the coming race troubles them little, or but academically, or not at all. Their own children are few and well-dowered; often, also, their wives are childless. It is the poor who must people the world. And these thieves have fallen upon the poor and ignorant all along the Jerusalem to Jericho road, and robbed their victims of all fragments of faith, filching away the very crumbs of the Protestant table. And they go their ways insolently, “on the other side,” wrapped in the mantle of the *Zeit-Geist*:

“The seeming truth that cunning times put on
To entrap the wisest.”

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All this makes life terribly hard for Mother—scared, poor Mother, toiling wistfully in the exterior darkness for her children, and taught by her men-folks to regard each Good Samaritan the Catholic Church sends along as the bearer of poisoned wine and oil. Is this fair to Mother? Is it chivalrous? Alas! the age of chivalry is dead—for her. Because chivalry in its essence—respect for womanhood, that is—is ending where it began, as an exclusive note of the Church, being the Catholic outgrowth of devotion to Our Lady. It is unknown to the Neo-Pagans, who rate woman as a creature for lust and not for love, as Locke (who was never married) explicitly taught, and sturdy William Penn, a good husband, was at pains to deny.

The heresiarchs and other misbelievers who have paved the way for the cultured heathen teachers we have too much with us were mostly unmothered boys. Either they were orphaned young, or the mother who reared them was hen-headed and in-devout. French infidels, though, being nearly always well and wisely mothered, mostly make death-bed repentances like Jules Simon, or submit in the plenitude of their powers to grace, like Brunetière, Coppée, and Huysmans among the distinguished dead, Adolphe Retté and others among the living. This is practically a standing law of God's mercy in France, so truly called by her writers a "land of mother-worship."

Millions acclaim another and more loyally Catholic country as the true *pays du culte de la mère*. They are justified by the tear-stained history of Ireland for fifteen stormy centuries. In head and heart I

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am convinced that St. Patrick's prayer for the indefectibility of Irish faith, from his fifth century to this our twentieth cycle of redemption, has been made efficacious only by the devotion of Irish mothers. Superabundantly so, moreover, for they are the first teachers and spiritual guides of those Irish priests, whose work for souls is world-wide.

Even under Druidism Irish mothers must have been thoughtful and kindly, all-powerful as they were in the fierce septs, by native law and custom. No drop of Christian blood was shed to evangelize all Erin. And in Ireland alone, among European nations, was torture unknown in the national courts of justice, as part of legal procedure. There, I think, speaks wise and tender Irish womanhood.

Taking the Church as a whole, if permanently bad men have been mostly unmothered, the permanently good whom we call the Saints have generally had Saints for their mothers. A goodly proportion of these holy matrons have themselves been canonized, and raised to the same altars with their children. St. Augustine and St. Monica, St. Louis and St. Blanche are names that will occur to all, and the beautiful list might be prolonged to much length. However—

“ Ne forçons pas notre génie :
Nous ne ferions rien avec grâce.”

The cobbler to his last and the essayist to his work, leaving the hagiologist to his—the noblest form of literary endeavour, assuredly, since the closing words of actual inspiration were written in Patmos, and the New Testament was closed.

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Outside the fold, the coming race bids fair to ride devilward, with wailing mothers plucking at its robe. If I have indicated as forecasting its career only breaches of the commandment seventh in order, it is not that I am forgetting many grimly precocious revolts against prohibitions that precede. These may not be touched upon, if only for the reason Wendell Holmes used to give for preferring anatomy to some other medical studies. "Bones," he said, "are clean to handle, and dry." Moreover, there is the warning of St. Paul, concerning things that must not be so much as mentioned among us.

A sad world, my masters, and a bad one, to hide Christ from His little ones in almost all lands where the State is schoolmaster. A sad world and a mad world, mesdames—you who have honoured me by reading these lines thus far. To you especially I would say: Are you not sorry for those myriad mothers of the poor, who know not your light of Faith, your life of sacramental grace? Verily, the rich of this world are condemning these your sisters to bring up the new generation to lives they will lament, like new Rachels bewailing their children, not because "they are not," but because "they are."

To yourselves, mesdames, I can have no message, save one of reverence and much affection. For I am no preacher to my betters, no prophet to those who know—neither a prophet nor the son of a prophet; just a butterfly of letters; bruised, too, and singed in the red running gear of this world. So many poor moths hover about the blinding acetylene glare of its juggernaut automobile, the daily or weekly press, and tumble into the mechan-

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ism, and " Whirr !" they cry ; " see, we are working hard, we are moving fast, we are driving the Car of Progress !" I was of these, and thus may tell you nothing you know not better than I, of the things that are to your peace.

But I can write this. I have known in God's mercy what it means to possess, and in His wisdom what it costs to lose, a holy Catholic mother. For the loss of such earth has no parallel. And for the good estate of that sainted soul, I humbly beg an *Ave* from Catholic mothers whose children are yet to rear.

III

GOD AND THE ROD

"God's stripes are caresses." The words are Robert Louis Stevenson's, but Newman might have used them. "The perfection of man consists in suffering all things well, as if they happened to him of his own volition." St. Francis de Sales, in citing this dictum of the Pagan Seneca, adds that he wishes St. Augustine had spoken it. Schopenhauer held nothing more clearly proven than that the evil in the world is due to the sins of the world.

Protestant, Pagan, cynic philosopher—all three expound, "every man in his own tongue," that *sensus communis* of candid humanity which leads to the threshold of Catholic truth. Properly speaking, no evils exist here below save revolts against God in thought, in word, and in work. The bad consequences of such are alone abiding. Saint after Saint has taught us that sin is the only true evil.

All transitory ills, all sorrow and all pain, may readily be transmuted into sanctity; *are* daily so transmuted, as our priests and nuns and Catholic nurses know.

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"Whomso God loveth He scourgeth, and every son whom He receiveth, He chasteneth." These words were repeated to Herman Merivale on the sad morrow of the day when his solicitor killed himself, after financially ruining the convert-dramatist. "Of course He does, my dear fellow," was the reply; "and the more He loves, the more He chastens."

God's stripes are caresses that we often see for such, even in the twilight of this world, when the rod is laid aside, and light is cast upon the naughty years, and we can count and cherish the merciful scars on our flesh.

In an essay arranged around the subject "Optimism," Mr. Arthur C. Benson impugns this fundamental Christian teaching, and with it the wisdom, mercy, and providence of God. He is a popular British writer, and the son of an Archbishop of Canterbury :

"My own experience, the older I grow and the more I see of life," he remarks, "is that I feel it to be a much more bewildering and terrifying thing than I used to think it. To use a metaphor, instead of its being a patient educational process, which I would give all that I possessed to be able sincerely to believe it to be, it seems to me arranged far more upon the principle of a game of cricket—which I have always held to be in theory the most unjust and fortuitous of games."

We shall return in a moment to this spokesman of "Parliamentary Christians," as the Jew D'Israeli once called his fellow-adherents to the Elizabethan settlement. A short word of personal explanation, however, seems first to be demanded.

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In speaking of "the rod and the staff" wherewith David says that God had "comforted" him, a lay writer would gladly keep to his own very spacious province, the world of men and letters. But the "literary giants" (as their publishers' circulars call them) now writing smooth infidel tracts in the popular magazines under the guise of essays and nature-studies leave one no choice in the matter if protest is to be raised on the platform they have chosen. The Catholic man of letters who would say his word concerning such opponents must have no false shame in selecting religious weapons from the armoury of the Church. At the worst some few of his friends may deem him a "moonstruck voteen," as gallant John O'Hagan once humorously dubbed himself.

For my own part, if I am compelled at times to abandon the "humanities," as our fathers well called the profaner literary studies, and to throw the Catechism or heavier pebbles from the Catholic brook at this or that "giant's" head, I do not do it *pour mon plaisir à moi*, as a certain French priest-professor in the days of my youth used mildly to explain to the boy he was about to whip. I am rather in the case of the Hibernian Zouave at the Battle of Mentana, who wadded his gun with pages from his Prayer-Book. "Sure, nothing else came so handy," he explained. His excuse must serve as mine.

Now here is this growing Goliath of the foregoing page—this Mr. Arthur Christopher Benson—being encouraged monthly by an American recreative magazine to cry aloud in its pages that there are

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things in life he cannot fathom, and that his Maker seems crueller to him and his than he was ever wont to consider. The whole burden of his lay might be crushed into three quatrains of Stevenson's "Counterblast Ironical".

" It's strange that God should fash to frame
The yearth and lift sae hie,
An' clean forget to explain the same
To a gentleman like me.

* * * * *

" It's a different thing that I demand,
Tho' humble as can be—
A statement fair in my Maker's hand,
To a gentleman like me.

" A clear account writ fair an' broad,
An' a plain apologie ;
Or the deevil a ceevil word to God
From a gentleman like me."

The mischief is that Mr. Benson is a competent vintner and blender of speech. He knows how to dissolve his ha'porths of doubt in flagons of brilliant-hued sack. When we read of the barber who said mournfully to George Borrow at Byron's funeral, " I, too, have had my sorrows," we smile. Not so as we read Mr. Benson's elusive, academic self-studies. Ever and anon, just when we are beginning to like him, he fairly falls weeping on the reader's vest—or bodice, as the case may be—and sighs between sobs : " God seems so cruel, so *very* enigmatic."

George Eliot had doubts of Tennyson's grief for Hallam when she saw it evinced in a pseudo-theological nature-poem long years in the making.

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The sheer unnecessaryness of thus wearing one's heart upon one's sleeve, all slotted for nickels, cannot fail to beget in some minds misgiving about Mr. Benson. Do the lachrymal glands work out of business hours? Are such sorrows, like Werther's, for exportation?

It is impossible to say. The Protestant, University-bred Englishman's real religious views are dark mysteries to no one more than to himself. From before the days of the "Religio Medici," Protestant writers of English literature have been forced to leave the key in the lock of their inmost devotional storeroom. "I am of the religion of all sensible men," says somebody in Moore's "Anecdotes." "And what religion is that, pray?" "Sensible men never say," is the reply. Sir Thomas Browne advises readers not to disclose their own comforting solutions and compromises lest their peace be broken. Truly the Reformation has begotten a valetudinarian Goddess of Truth. In Holmes's phrase, she cannot safely be given an airing except in a well-closed carriage.

For all that, the brain of the British don may often possess the sincerity of self-deceit, being, as it is, a honeycomb of reason-tight compartments, holding incompatibilities that would blow the very brainpan to the roof if the partitions gave. And a man with such a mind may be not only a seeker after truth, but a very holy man, as was John Henry Newman, with many another, in the *Sturm und Drang* before the '45.

I once saw a good deal of a disciple of Cardinal Newman whose intellect kept him ever hovering on

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the threshold of the Church. In the matter of the Catholic claims his spacious mind was a congeries of sealed-up sweets and bitters. The former predominated, but the rest were never expelled. Perhaps reminiscence may serve our turn rather better than analysis. At eight o'clock every Sunday morning he devoutly received the English Sacrament from his vicar. On the stroke of eleven he was the most reverent worshipper at High Mass in the nearest Catholic Church. Every week he would place a sovereign upon our offertory plate, and delicately mask the gold piece with a silver florin, held uppermost between thumb and index as he made his gift. An author, a critic, and an editor of eminence, this humble Christian feared to abash his poorer neighbours, and shrank from giving others any cause to praise him. I only heard of the pious ruse after his death, from the lips of a friend who used to collect our offertory.

When this Protestant benefactor of a Catholic mission lay dying, he sent for his minister, and received the Anglican Sacrament for the last time. Then he dismissed the clergyman courteously, and summoned an old and intimate friend—a Catholic priest. It was perfectly understood between the two that Father X—— was in no wise called as an ambassador of the Church to the bedside, but he remained there for very many hours, soothing the last moments as a human comrade. He could give conditional absolution, of course, from the moment unconsciousness set in, and this he did loyally every quarter of an hour till the strange, earnest spirit had fled.

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Yet it was of this man that Aubrey de Vere could write : " I believe Holt Hutton to be of those who die in the soul of the Church, while severed from her visible communion." Truly, like their charity, the invincible ignorance of cultured Britons must cover a multitude of sins.

I fancy that Richard Holt Hutton himself, however, when editor of the London *Spectator*, would have found stern words of reproach for any Archbishop's son who should print (as does Mr. Benson) the following amazing denial of the Resurrection of Our Lord, in pages meant to amuse all readers :

" No man can possibly hold the continuance of personal identity to be an indisputable fact, because there is nothing in the way of direct evidence on the subject, and, indeed, all the evidence that exists is rather against the belief than for it."

Faith in the Godhead of Christ was Mr. Hutton's sheet-anchor through the whole of a blameless and beneficent working life. He was born into strict Unitarianism, by the way, so that his passionate advocacy of the Catholic doctrine of the Trinity was a doubly beautiful thing. His friend and neighbour, Sir Mountstuart Grant-Duff, once wrote a panegyric of Ernest Renan, in which he called the Frenchman a saint. Mr. Hutton reviewed it in a column of scholarly banter, and called Renan what he was—a Voltaire *sucré*. What would he call such people as Mr. Benson? Bradlaugh's *beurrés*, perhaps. An aged lady I know calls a much-twittering poet of the band a " blasphemous canary."

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Seriously, it is a terrible trade to go about troubling the half-faith of the half-literate, as did Bradlaugh and Ingersoll. The outspoken and brazen ineptitudes of the latter, indeed, would appal our Bradlaugh's *beurrés*, who studiously pay truth the homage of civil-seeming slander. They hint their doubt; they "hesitate dislike." But if, so doing, they are more potent to topple ill-read souls into "pestilential sloughs of decadence," and thence hellward, will it not be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for them? The Phœnician inhabitants of those cities were missionaries of commerce alone; never of their hazy Oriental agnosticisms and misbeliefs. They kept Astarte for home consumption. How easy it were for Mr. Benson and the rest to stack their doubts by the study-window, and render themselves privily Christless! As it is, they must not be affronted if the discourteous say in the gate that their wares are sent to America as the cargoes of Tyre and Sidon reached Britain—for tin.

Whatever the primary motive, the final fact remains—it pays. The older Mugwumps of the Anglican Establishment were content to bind up their doubts in heavy tomes like "Essays and Reviews," in which, by the way, Dr. Temple, Archbishop Benson's immediate successor, figured as a Didymus Unconvinced, thereby incurring much hero-worship, some censure, and a bishopric. The men we deal with prefer cosier outlets, midway between short stories and an illustrated serial. Above all, they have taken to heart the advice tendered in "Patience" (so far back as the April of 1881, in the

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palmy days of the old London Opéra Comique) to all who would be Prophets of the Hour !

“ You must lie upon the daisies,
And discourse in novel phrases
Of your complicated state of mind.
The meaning doesn't matter,
If it's only idle chatter
Of a transcendental kind.
And everyone will say,
As you walk your mystic way :

‘ If this young man expresses himself in terms too deep
for *me*,

Why, what a very singularly deep young man this deep
young man must be ! ”

Maeterlinck and D'Annunzio have hearkened to Bunthorne's song. Indeed, his prose apostrophe a little later might serve as colophon to many of their chapters if turned into measured French or volcanic Italian. “ Tell me, girl, do you ever yearn ? ” he asks. And Patience demurely replies : “ I earn my living.” “ No, no,” cries the poet—a stage-presentment of unhappy Oscar Wilde. “ Do you know what it is to be heart-hungry ? Do you know what it is to yearn for the Indefinable, and yet to be brought face to face daily with the Multiplication Table ? Do you know what it is to seek oceans and to find puddles ?—to long for whirlwinds, and to have to do the best you can with the bellows ? That's my case. Oh, I am a cursed thing ! ”

And now listen to Mr. Benson :

“ To-day I have been riding quietly among fields deep with buttercups and fringed by clear, slow streams. The trees are in full spring leaf, only the oaks and walnuts a little belated, unfurling their

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rusty-red fronds. A waft of rich scent comes from a hawthorn hedge where a hidden cuckoo flutes, or just where the lane turns by the old water-mill, which throbs and grumbles with the moving gear, a great lilac-bush leans out of a garden, and fills the air with perfume. Yet, as I go, I am filled with a heavy anxiety, which plays with my sick heart as a cat plays with a mouse, letting it run a little in the sun, and then pouncing upon it in terror and dismay. The beautiful sounds and sights round me—the sight of the quiet, leisurely people I meet—ought, one would think, to soothe and calm the unquiet heart. But they do not ; they rather seem to mock and flout me with a savage insolence of indifferent welfare.”

“ Et tout cela était si triste, si morne,” one murmurs, for the passage is sheer Pierre Loti. Much more of it follows, in a spray of tears and cocaine, till one is damply anæsthetized to receive the prod of an Ingersollism—Colonel Bob’s hackneyed plea that God must be either unjust or of limited power, since pain and sorrow are allowed in His universe :

“ But the essence of God’s omnipotence is that both law and matter are His, and originate from Him, so that, if a single fibre of what we know to be evil can be found in the world, either God is responsible for that, or He is dealing with something He did not originate and cannot overcome.”

A seemingly orthodox sentence follows, in concession, perhaps, to the Church of England Catechism :

“ Nothing can extricate us from this dilemma, except the belief that what we think evil is not really

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evil at all, but hidden good ; and thus we have firm ground under our feet at last, and can begin to climb out of the abyss."

Away fly the Thirty-nine Articles, and down comes a peroration that Universalists and many English-speaking Freemasons might conveniently remember :

" And then we feel in our own hearts how indomitable is our sense of our right to happiness, how unconquerable our hope ; how swiftly we forget unhappiness ; how firmly we remember joy ; and then we see that the one absolutely permanent and vital power in the world is the power of love, which wins victories over every evil we can name ; and if it is so plain that love is the one essential and triumphant force in the world, it must be the very heart-beat of God ; till we feel that when, soon or late, the day comes for us when our swimming eyes discern ever more faintly the awe-struck pitying faces round us, and the senses give up their powers one by one, and the tides of death creep on us, and the daylight dies—*that even so we shall find that love awaiting us in the region to which the noblest and bravest and purest, as well as the vilest and most timid and most soiled, have gone.*"

This preachment erects the eighteenth-century Deists' Divinity—the " God of pure benevolence " ; the Creator who should condone all crime and stultify His own Eternal Wisdom by receiving into bliss unending the rebelliously and finally impenitent sinner, who needs only a further lease of life for further deeds of hate. To such a pass has rejection of the Catholic all-solving doctrine of Purgatory reduced the children of the Reformation.

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The paragraphs that ensue are written around "optimism." To my mind they are padding—clumps of cotton-wool exhaling the faint, sad odour of chloroform. But not this, nor all the drowsy syrups of the Eastern hemisphere, can make Westward readers blink the lie about the Resurrection thrust in at the close. I have already quoted it. I confess still to wonderment that Mr. Benson durst write the words.

The essay ends, as such things generally do, in a phantasmagoria of Deism—Tennyson's "larger hope," Nirvana, Pantheism, and the worship of humanity. Monsieur Auguste Comte, or George Eliot and her *Secundum Quid* of a husband, or any of their old Positivistic set at St. John's Wood in the sixties, might have written the final sentences. Yet Mr. Benson has canned this pemmican for American use as the freshly-cured product of his private stockyard :

"The belief (*i.e.*, the doctrine of the immortality of the soul) is in reality based upon nothing but instinct and desire, and the impossibility of conceiving of life as existing apart from one's own perception. But even if a man does not believe it as in any sense a certainty, he may cherish a hope that it is true, and he may be generously and sincerely grateful for having been allowed to taste, through the medium of personal consciousness, the marvellous experience of the beauty and interest of life, its emotions, its relationships, its infinite yearnings, even though the curtain may descend upon his own consciousness of it, and he himself may become as though he had never been, his vitality

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blended afresh in the vitality of the world, just as the body of his life, so near to him, so seemingly his own, will undoubtedly be fused and blent afresh in the sum of matter. A man, even though racked with pain and tortured with anxiety, may deliberately and resolutely throw himself into sympathy with the mighty will of God, and cherish this noble and awe-inspiring thought, the thought of the onward march of humanity—righting wrongs, amending errors, fighting patiently against pain and evil, until perhaps, far off and incredibly remote, our successors and descendants, linked, indeed, with us in body and soul alike, may enjoy that peace and tranquillity, that harmony of soul which we ourselves can only momentarily and transitorily obtain."

A true haggis this, or, as W. E. Henley ungallantly called his adoptive country's dish, a "gallimaufry of miscellaneous offal." Having paid their money, eclectic readers may emphatically take their choice.

Enough of Mr. Benson and his methods—methods that muss the universal shirt-front with vendible tears, leaving behind them crystallizations of olden and newish unbelief. One reaches for the Catechism instinctively, in the mood of the man at Mentana. Of a surety, "nothing else comes so handy."

"A sense of difficulty in reconciling the Christian system with the existence of sin and its consequences," writes Father Sylvester Hunter, S.J., in "Outlines of Dogmatic Theology," vol. ii., p. 116, "has led some persons to reject the Christian revelation and embrace a form of Deism, which makes the world to be ruled by a God of pure benevolence. These apparently persuade themselves that the evil

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is not in sin, but in the punishment of sin. Others are more consistent, with a bad sort of consistency, and urge that the existence of pain is irreconcilable with the Deist theory ; it may be allowed that these Atheists have the better of the Deists on this one point, but they themselves have no answer to give when a Christian or a Deist calls on them to explain the origin of the world. The existence of the world, if there be no God, is a vastly greater difficulty than the existence of evil in the world, according to Christian teaching.

“ It will be observed that we say nothing as to the amount of evil in the world. It is impossible to measure this amount, and the warm discussions which have gone on whether men and brutes have more happiness or misery in life are perfectly futile ; we have no measure either of happiness or of misery, nor any means of applying such a measure, did it exist. The difficulty before us has been raised in substance by the existence of the smallest evil, and any enumeration of the details of what goes on around us merely excites the imagination and disturbs the reason. As it has been pointedly expressed, some men would have God dethroned if a fly suffers a passing pang.

“ The Christian does not pretend to be able to give a full explanation of the difficulty, but he remarks that it is merely a difficulty, not a demonstration. He is content to hold that both the Attributes of God and the existence of evil are undoubted truths, and he is confident that they cannot be proved to be contradictory, so he is content to acknowledge that he is without the powers of mind which would

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enable him to prove that they are really parts of one harmonious whole. At the same time, he can put forward some considerations which go far towards diminishing the urgency of the difficulty. First he observes that his system must be taken as a whole, so as to include the Fall of Man and its effects, and account must be taken of the whole life of man, here and hereafter, not of his life on earth alone ; he may well make the words of St. Paul his own : ' If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable ' (1 Cor. xv. 19) ; he tries to live soberly and justly and godly in this world, looking for the blessed hope and coming of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ (Titus ii. 13), knowing that tribulation worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory (2 Cor. iv. 17). These are his hopes, and he is ready to give an account of the grounds on which he entertains them ; and in view of them he defies everyone to prove that the existence of physical evil is inconsistent with the Attributes of God."

Some readers, perhaps, may like to see a word or two written on the subject by the reverend author of " My New Curate," in his book " Parerga " :

" The mystery of Suffering ! The great eternal problem ! And yet no problem at all if we only consider it as a Law of Being. Apart altogether from the higher and transcendent and beautiful teachings of religion, which place an aureole around the crown of thorns on each wounded head, and throw the iridescence of hope athwart the gloomiest and darkest sky, is it not in the nature of things that suffering is inevitable ? I look at it under

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three aspects : (1) As a necessary condition of imperfect beings ; (2) as a necessary motive-power in carrying on the work of existence ; (3) as an unconscious but most noble revelation to higher beings* than we are of facts and principles in the great economy of creation that perhaps otherwise would be hidden from them for ever."

But let us end on the sweet grave music of the Mystic of Kempen :

" Why, then, art thou afraid to take up thy cross, which leads to a kingdom ?

" In the cross is salvation ; in the cross is life ; in the cross is protection from thine enemies.

" In the cross is infusion of heavenly sweetness ; in the cross is strength of mind ; in the cross is joy of spirit."

* Compare these words of St. Francis de Sales : " If envy could reign in the kingdom of eternal love, the angels would envy two prerogatives of man : One is, that Our Lord endured the cross for us, and not for them—at least, not so entirely ; the other, that men endure something for Our Lord—the suffering of God for man, and the suffering of man for God."

IV

BOYS

'GOB. Pray you, sir, stand up ; I am sure you are not Launcelot, my boy.

'LAUN. . . . I am Launcelot, your boy that was, your son that is, your child that shall be."

Merchant of Venice, Act II., Scene 2.

"ONCE a man, twice a child," says the Munster proverb. It is a homely saying, symbolizing nothing deeper than the helplessness of infancy and of extreme old age. The Gospel would have us recast it and make it run, "Once a man and thrice a child"; as who should say, "Be a man, indeed, but at heart a child ever and always." For of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.

By the dictionary, a boy is a "male child," and the common law of all English-speaking peoples supports the definition.

The boy at boarding-school does not. He is even indignant with the French master who calls him sometimes "mon enfant." Much of his favourite literature encourages this frame of mind. Writers of "books for boys" have much to answer for. With even the best of them (I am not referring, of course, to our own fine writers—Father Finn,

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Mrs. Waggaman, and many another—but to the clever non-Catholic disciples of Fenimore Cooper and Captain Mayne Reid) the Boy is a being apart. Whatever he is in their pages, he is not that tearful, contemptible creature, a Child. Children do not hold a hundred Iroquois at bay with a Winchester rifle and a haughty gaze. It is for Boys to do that. Poor little *garsoons*, thus stripped of their glory, their childhood !

The word "boy," in conventional acceptance, is an almost tragic blunder. When a mother sees her child, first home for the holidays, grown loveless and unlovable, her visitors cheer her with pestilent inanity. "Boys will be boys," they purr, the aigrettes nodding sagely over the tea-cups. It makes the blood boil only less effervescently than when Madame Job's comforters say in later years : "Young men must sow their wild oats"; or in France (for the Devil is a linguist) : "Cette jeunesse, cette jeunesse, ça doit s'amuser."

Really one feels almost lonesome in advancing the truism that little boys are just children. Their fathers are apt to deny it. Some of their masters scout it. They themselves had as lief be called girls as children—except in the confessional, God bless them ! Their sisters surrender, and seem to allow that childhood passes with the pinafore. Their mothers—but that is another chapter.

True childhood should be encouraged to endure much longer than the period of pants—preposterous little garments, indeed, to be endued with the finality of a Roman *toga virilis*. In a sense, and in spite of ourselves, we who have beards are children

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to the end. " Nous ne sommes jamais tout à fait formés," says Bossuet ; " il y a toujours quelque chose en nous que l'âge ne mûrit point." We may be child-*like* or child-*ish*, as we elect, of course, and if we choose to be the former, God always adds wisdom to the simplicity that makes for manliness. The childish man is as poor a thing as the mannish child, whose wholesale manufacture (in some even of our own schools) all mothers deplore. Good children or naughty ones, however, the great Bishop of Meaux is right : we are all of us unripe ; all of us able to mature by age, yet little the worse for our immaturities if we admit them frankly to ourselves, and commend them with beseechings to God.

This sane and simple doctrine, of common sense rather than revelation, would seem to affront a good many modern teachers. They say in effect, to judge by the prospectuses of their academies, that Bossuet lies. They claim to turn out the finished human article. They have laid down such costly educational plant, of the best approved home and imported makes, that no raw material can possibly be left untreated in their output. The more pompous among them say that they turn out Men, whatever the Frenchman holds.

I bet on Bossuet. The school of life leaves veterans incomplete, and its courses are longer and rather more thorough than those of junior establishments, where little souls are devoured by public examinations, and little bodies by routine and competitive sports. The claim of such to finality is the merest clap-trap, where it is not conscious cant. And we need say no more about it.

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Inside the Catholic Church very many wise heads are coming to think and to advise that a boy should remain under home influence till about a year after the awkward period when the voice breaks and physical childhood ends :

" Be very careful in your choice of a school," wrote Father Joseph M'Donnell, S.J., apropos of Christian education, in a fine number of the *Irish Messenger*,* " and so long as your children are industrious and diligent, see that their bodily energies are not overtaxed or driven, as is so liable to be the case in this age of competition among schools. A child needs lots of sleep and sufficient recreation.

" The period of its secondary education is the crisis of a child's career. We confess to a decided preference for day-schools over boarding-schools—especially in the case of boys. The longer the home influence remains, the better ; that is to say, provided the home is what it ought to be."

Boarding-schools are almost dismissed in a single sensible remark : " Yet in many cases the boarding-school is a necessity, and it has its own advantages."

Necessity knows no law. I do not wish to blink for a moment the cases where Catholic parents are simply compelled to send their boys quite early away from home. I would only raise an emphatic protest against the monotony of the main " reason " adduced for such " compulsion " in the great bulk of cases that came my way when I was teaching. It consisted of the unblushing averment that Willie, aged ten, had grown beyond parental control. I teach no longer, but I hear this still.

* August, 1908.

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O paterfamilias, have you really tried interviews in the wood-shed? They used to answer thirty years ago. Fathers were skilled, if merciful, operators then. The copious literature denouncing "corporal punishment" has weakened their theory, and consequently their practice. In musical phrase, they have lost their "touch." If you have given yourself up to this mushy humanitarianism, so that you never spank except when you are in blazing wrath (as you know you ought not, my dear sir), then send anarchical Willie away to some Prefect who knows his business. The unemotional nature of this gentleman's performance will scare Willie back into the belief that virtue pays, and in almost a single interview. I have known a Prefect of Discipline to hide a yawn with one hand while dealing out swishes with the other, and to stop dead in the middle of a séance and ask the patient absently if he thought the ice would bear next Thursday, the wind having veered south-west.

If you imitate the spirit of such methods, impatient or indolent sir, mere mention of the wood-shed will keep Willie subdued at home, a comfort to his mother, to you, and to himself—not forgetting his sorely-tried sisters.

René Bazin, the French Academician and great Catholic author, laments openly in *En Province* that little boys become mannikins the moment they are toppled into the cauldron of boarding-school life. "Malheureusement, ils grandissent," he exclaims.

"They learn; they are no longer themselves; they are filled with our ideas, our frippery, our pedantries.

"They used to invent; they now repeat. And

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what stuff, ye gods ! I have still in memory whole phrases of geography and natural history, as approved by the Minister of Public Instruction : ' Orleans, celebrated vinegar. Joan of Arc delivered it from the English after a famous siege '—' The Australians, a variety of degraded blacks '—' The stomach is a pouch shaped like a bagpipe, and holds about two litres.' By dint of rehearsing their children's lessons, the fathers and mothers of to-day know all about it, I assure you. They might even secure 'honourable mention' at the general examinations. All this, of course, must be as it should, since pedagogues exist, whose trade is to make us all work, and who hold it to be quite the right thing. But oh, sweetest Childhood, I think we have abridged you ; I think there are no real children left, after seven or eight years of age.

"Wee men and wee women have taken their places. Their inquisitiveness is kept ever awake. Unending curiosity enlarges their field of knowledge while shrinking their domain of mother-wit. They are still very good. They love their parents as best they can. But what can they do ? Willy-nilly and all unconsciously, their impulsive affection is already divided. Life is claiming them from father and mother—life opening out before them—a radiant, unending road, such as once we all saw and desired. It soon wins them over. The little ones will go. Even now they are on the march."

A pretty simile follows. M. Bazin pictures a party of children gaily leaving home for a day's excursion in the governess-car, driven by one of the bigger boys. At the turn in the road they wave

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their hands towards home. "Au revoir, maman ! À ce soir ! Nous serons sages !" I would like to translate the whole passage, but it is best to hasten to its application. "Even thus do they act," says the author, "when boarding-school life begins. That we may not weep, they turn towards us now and then. But their faces and their souls are set towards the future."

He mentions a mother who said to him : "How little our children belong to us ! Very often they come without our asking for them, and then off they go . . . and so quickly." Yet this was a happy mother : "one of those whose only sorrows are these needful pangs."

"Ces souffrances nécessaires !" I can't for the life of me see why they should be *always* necessary, thus early in the life of the child. "We do not rear them for ourselves," say French parents, with wistful fortitude. Conceded. But neither did Our Lady rear Our Lord for herself alone. Yet He—our Model—abode with her thirty years from birth, almost bound to the girdle of her robe. Surely most Christian mothers are the best educators of their sons, for about the first half of that space of time, with the indispensable aid of a Christian day-school. The Boy Jesus went to such a one—or, rather, to its prototype in the Jewish Church, the *Beth-hassepher* ("book-house," or school-house) attached to the Nazareth synagogue.

"The echoes of the world," says Faber, "are heard inside the Church." This cannot be helped, but too many make response, and halloo with the world that education means the stuffing of the mind

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with facts, as a pillow is stuffed with feathers. It does not, cannot. It means (the definition, like the metaphor, is Father M'Donnell's) "the gradual leading out, or development, both spiritual and intellectual, of the inherent powers of the mind."

Yet stuffing has a market value, and we must e'en submit to much of it now. Let the day-school stuff, then, and God be with the work, and let the parents redress the balance. The balance? Yes, for the intellect and will and affections must be nourished and strengthened, to outpoise the gorging memory.

Let us win onward to other ground. The forward little boy and the backward one—the smart *Wunder-kind* and the dunce—should never be sent to boarding-school.

Once teachers have him at their mercy, the ambitious ones too often unwarrantably mortgage the clever child's whole future, and coin it into scholastic present value. As to the dull little boys, some masters talk and act as if such had no right to exist. Now, St. Thomas Aquinas, the greatest philosopher of the Church, and perhaps of all time, was an exceedingly dull little boy. So was Sir Walter Scott, but the point need not be laboured. Was not Ulysses Grant dubbed "Useless" till the fine intellect began to mature?

Short-sighted "smartness" is not typical of *our* boarding-school instruction by any manner of means, but it is rather too common. There will always be men—and brilliant men—to adopt the career of education as a means of winning fame. They are the merest meteors at best. They blaze and dazzle

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and go out, and their blinded pupils must beg matches for years to grope the way of life. The cleverer ones are too cock-sure, and hurt themselves in the dark till they laboriously learn that character is of more avail than the swiftest storage of memory. The dunces are vengeful, and even apt to develop a curious, sullen, and not always dumb dislike of the clergy as a whole, should even one of their teachers have been a priest. I was breathlessly (though not unkindly) driven by very young priests in my teens, and between them they contrived to damage my health a little. Celtic blood tells, however, and I caught no "anti-clericalism." The sole aftermath I can trace is nervous dyspepsia. Boys of the future will have a better time. The Holy Father (they say) is about to raise the canonical age of priestly ordination by seven years. "Time hath a chastening hand."

* * * * *

If parents cannot instil into their boys a love of reading (and of reading the *best*, and the *best* alone), I know not (in these days of science and of the mixed mathematics) who will care to do it for them. Good writers are born of good readers. Newman's main criterion of a good education was the ability to write. And we need male Catholic writers of the lighter literature—attractive fiction, criticism, æsthetics, and the like—so very badly in these days, *and we need them among the laity*. Somehow the best women's work fails to grip male readers of the toiling classes, and non-Catholics shy at a clerical signature. Not long ago I read a letter in one of our English Catholic journals from an intelligent

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operative, in which he said that by lending his mates a few well-written novels portraying Catholic life, he had cleared away more prejudices in a month than by controverting for years. Anti-Catholic prejudices exist rather in the imagination than in the reason, and the first must be purged before the second can be reached.

See with what infectious enthusiasm and gallantry the little band of French lay *littérateurs* is working, though the deaths of Coppée and Brunetière have left them unofficered! Bazin, Adolphe Retté, and others less known outside France, may topple the Blocards yet. As I write, Bazin's "Le Blé qui Lève" is in its seventy-eighth edition. And this Catholic novel (in some respects the most memorable since Manzoni's "The Betrothed") was only published in 1908! Its striking *dénouement* turns on a three-days spiritual retreat for working men, to which the Socialist hero is coaxed by a sensible Catholic comrade. Truly the pen may work more mightily than the sword, and even (in a sense) than the crozier. In a naughty world the mitre appals, the yellow-back allures.

To hark back to that love of reading which underlies the power of writing. If it be not a birthright, or a product of that early home use which is second nature, how is a boy to acquire it in days when little good poetry and less good prose ever come his way at school? Manifestly, it is for parents to infuse a habit that will save a boy from vice and folly more effectually than aught in the world besides, save religion only. Most mothers can readily succeed in their endeavour if children remain under their care

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throughout the plastic years. How many great writers have confessed that they owed their triumphs to the habit of reading good books, acquired and fostered at home !

It is hard, then, to evade the now widely-spreading conviction that the " necessary pains " of which M. Bazin speaks should be spared to parents till much later than is the case. The delay will save the boy himself acute *souffrances* by no means *nécessaires*. Often the early wrench so lacerates the child's affections that when the wound cicatrizes his heart is numb to family love for years. He is a good boy, and has Mass and the Sacraments, thank God, in the place of his exile, and so he *obeys* his parents. This obedience is an *effective* honour, and an *effective* love, and sufficiently fulfils the Fourth Commandment ; but the *affective* forms of any virtue may not be lightly atrophied at any age, and least of all in childhood. When a boy and his parents walk severed ways too soon in life, they suffer a long and useless martyrdom before the young man's heart goes out to father and mother as of old. Hear René Bazin on this :

" Nevertheless, there is one compensation, and we at least love our parents a second time, and with an overflowing tenderness of instinct and reflection that does not pass away. It is when our own turn comes, and we learn by experience the long and wondrous love in which childhood is wholly enveloped—the worries, the work, the hopes yet greater than our dreams, and oh ! above all, when we look backward through the years and see once again the mother's mindfulness, the inexhaustible

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kindness of her gaze, the little ten-sou gifts that bring tears to the eyes, and the morning smile and the nightly kiss, for which it now seems, does it not, that we have not said a 'thank you'?"

Surely the sad intervallum between first and second child-love, extending sometimes from the boy's ninth to his thirtieth year, should be shortened, or, if possible, annihilated. I submit, kind ladies and gentlemen of the jury, that such a consummation can and ought to be effected by keeping little boys as long as possible under the influence of the Christian home, that thereby they may never incur the charge on which St. Paul arraigned the pagans, of being *sine affectione*, devoid of natural affection.*

Through the Christian home, a myriadfold more readily than through any boarding-school, the Catholic Church can get a purchase on little boys born to her, and make of them what Oakeley describes in the following beautiful passage, which I copied from one of the holy convert's sermons long ago, unluckily without noting the reference :

"She [the Church] does not outrage, she rather seeks to consecrate, that love of the beautiful which she finds in us. She seeks to bind on the side of holy purity those tender, enthusiastic—nay, I will say those romantic—instincts with which Heaven itself has gifted the pliant mind of youth. She would not, for she could not, destroy them; but seeks to elicit them by holy attractives, to guide them by wise management, to train them in orderly lines, till of that which, left to itself, might have

* Rom. i. 31.

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encumbered the ground by its undisciplined shoots and wasted itself in a merely idle and unhealthy luxuriance, she rears no stunted and leafless trunk, ungraceful though innocuous, but a goodly and prolific vine, the joy of beholders and the ornament of the House of God."

V

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"Les petits cadeaux entretiennent l'amitié."

FRENCH PROVERB.

THERE is a story current of an eager young woman whose talents, though exceeded by her ambition, sufficed to obtain her a post on the editorial staff of one of those magazines which survey the world from China to Peru, mostly with the aid of the camera, the scissors, and the mucilage-pot. The Professor of Literature at the college where this lady had erstwhile made some studies ran against her in the street one day, and observed that she wore what Artemus Ward has called "a worried look on to her eye."

Quite parenthetically, may the gentle showman's soul rest in peace, very close to that of Joel Chandler Harris! Is it not wonderful how God draws so many humorists, and poets, and similar childlike souls, into the bosom of the all-embracing Mother? Would not "A. Ward"—Charles Farrar Browne—have chuckled with amused yet deep content, had it been revealed to him in his short life of laughter and pain that his name would be one day enshrined in the majestic "Catholic Encyclopædia," amid the

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augustest of prelates and the greatest events in the Catholic Church's history? His laugh were, indeed, good to hear; for he was a true humorist, who found mirth only in blameless incongruities, leaving "the demons down under the sea" to make sport of sin, the sole true *incongruum* in a world not originally created for tears.

The lady we speak of was haggard, and her mentor asked her why.

"Because," said she, "I have been asked to write an article in our next issue, and I don't know how to set about it."

"Do not worry," said the professor. "Get thoroughly full of your subject, to saturation-point, and the essay will write itself."

"But my subject is 'Alcohol among Society Women'!" said the lady in horror, departing from him—*femme incomprise*—with a sense of considerable injury.

I had long wished to write some words upon the Catholic aspect of gifts at Noël. Our most transitory wishes, in Father Faber's phrase, are often "canonized," and so, sure enough, the day came when I received a suggestion I esteem a command to speak out those words. Now, in all sincerity, a consideration of Catholic gift-giving at Christmas-tide should be simple and forthright enough, and thus most easy to set upon paper. But I had pondered too long and "too precisely on the event." This state can be only quite adequately comprehended and condoned by brothers and sisters of the pen with wider experience of the tantrums of literary moods than the mythical young person we have

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instanced. I felt "full of my subject"—too full. I let "I dare not" wait upon "I would." I asked for respite, and (I grieve to say) very nearly extorted it. My obfuscation was only less complete than that with which our legendary lady imagined herself to be menaced. Its source, I hope I need hardly say, was cowardice, not inebriation in even the vaguest sense of that vinous metaphor.

Certainly the subject of gifts opens out a vista as lengthy as that premised in the scholastic title-page: "Of All that is Knowable and Not Knowable, and of Certain Other Matters." "What is there," cries St. James, "that we have not received?" All sinless things on God's bright earth are gifts, "coming down from on high, from the Father of Lights." Christmas itself is a gift.

"O flower of flowers, Our Lady of the May,
Thou gavest us the blessed Christmas mirth."

Thus sang poor Lionel Johnson in one of his loveliest poems. But only Dante could befittingly chant the gift, or the convert Milton on his death-bed,* or some seraph accorded human utterance. The Holy Trinity gave us Christmas, and it pleased the Undivided Godhead to give it us through Mary. "Omnia nos voluit Deus habere per Mariam."

On the human side, gifts made to friends at Christmas should be chosen for their congruity, their usefulness, their permanence, their beauty, their power of awakening affectionate memory of the living and

* It seems sufficiently proven now by the evidence of the Earl of Dorset, and of the poet's brother, Sir Christopher Milton, that the author of the "Ode on the Nativity" died a Catholic.

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yet tenderer reminiscence of the dead. Can you wonder I feared to evolve such a theme ?

In England, where these pages are written, the customary Christmas gift is dictated by the pen of the dead novelist Dickens. It consists of one or more turkeys. Throughout all the realm the dead birds are perfunctorily exchanged by rich people, who do not digest them. Charles Dickens' works are a vast epic of kindly Protestantism, and the founders of that creed laid down Faith as theory and Food as practice. "They were hatched, they grew, they were slain." Be this the epitaph of the victims commanded by Boz's light-hearted Lutheranism. It was Catholic Christmas gifts that appalled me.

And then two things befell which brought me on the platform, a willing captive, to speak my piece. An English nun of the Little Company of Mary, knowing the weakness of my sight, sent me an old-fashioned candle reflecting lamp, not too costly in days of yore, when men wrote treatises by the mild radiance of such, but impossible to purchase now. And an American Sister of Mercy mailed me, across the "unplumbed, salt, estranging sea," a copy of the "Life" of the holy first Bishop of Manchester, in fine, clear type. Both gifts arrived in the course of the selfsame week.

"Here is the solution," thought I, as I turned over, by the strong glow of the one, the final pages of the other, and read Dr. Bradley's aphorism :

"That affection cannot be harmful which does not so occupy the mind as to interfere with duty,

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which is, in its nature, what it should be ; which serves as a means to make us good."

Here was the solution. Those gifts—the two that had given hours of happiness to one unable to stand the glare of modern illuminants or the lime-light of most modern biographies, were apt and memorable, and it was thoughtfulness on the part of the givers that made them so. "Let me take an inventory of other gifts like these," I said, "and my task is done by the ready mode of examples."

If I was deterred in a projected *voyage autour de ma chambre* by memories of Xavier de Maistre, it was barely for a moment. The clever Savoyard, so preposterously extolled in anti-clerical French literary manuals at the expense of his abler brother, Count Joseph (whose masterly work, "Le Pape," we might esteem more highly were it not given so often as a highly-gilt prize-book in our schools), missed all his opportunities. His "Voyage" is downright dreary—a manifest, a sedulous aping of Lawrence Sterne. There is no mention of a single gift in the rooms about which he sentimentally "journeyed." Still, the French of the "Voyage" (and its morals) being, like the curate's immortal breakfast egg, "quite excellent in parts," young students may be tepidly thankful for the booklet. Its author has done better in "La Jeune Sibérienne" and "Le Lépreux de la Cité d'Aoste"—two subjects from real life that a less skilled pen could hardly have spoiled.

* * * * *

Without moving from my chair, I find the gold medal of the Sacred Heart that hangs from the end

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of my watch-chain. It was given me lang syne by a priest-professor, because he thought I spoke well in a Latin play—the “Menœchmi” of Plautus—so dull to read, like its derivative, “The Comedy of Errors,” and (also like the latter) so amusing to witness on the stage, when its grossness has been purged with the pencil.

There was a Bishop present, a witty man and a holy, who had the handsome features of a Cæsar on a coin. The naughty twin, Menœchmes I., whose rôle I was “doubling,” has to array himself in stolen finery, and to say to his sycophant—his “hanger-on” : “Hast ever seen a picture painted on a party-wall, of the capture of Ganymede by Jove’s eagle, or of Adonis by Venus ?”

“Yes,” grunts the sponger.

“Am not I like them ?” exults the nefarious Menœchmes.

When I came to the lines, it occurred to me, looking over where the footlights should have beamed, to the clear-cut features surmounted by the purple skull-cap, that I might introduce an unrehearsed effect. A portrait of the Bishop was hanging in full view of the audience near the stage where we played, for His Lordship was one of our former presidents. Pointing full to this, I declaimed the words syllabically :

“Num qua tu vidisti tabulam pictam in pariete,
Ubi aquila raperet Catamitum, aut ubi Venus Adoneum ?”

Perhaps you know what Speech Day audiences are. The speech took the clergy present beneath their reverend fifth ribs. In mummers’ phrase, “it

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fetched them." There was a roar of applause. The Bishop beamed and blushed, as why should so holy and handsome a prelate not do, when called Adonis from the stage, in a tongue not understood of the people, especially the ladies present ?

Ah me ! it was all very gay ; it was all very pleasant. Why can't there be always as much innocent fun in the world as there used to be in the final year at college ? It wouldn't be too hard if people tried. Mercifully, they make some endeavour at Christmas.

I know not if the sally achieved me the medal. But the medal came my way. And I can assure readers that its possession has saved them from hearing much to my disadvantage " when we shall meet again at compt," on the final day of Assize.

For the gift of a sacred object that is precious for its own sake, for that of the giver, and for the memories it, so to say, consolidates, is a wondrous talisman against evil. Worn openly, it wins priceless friends, scares away the subtler enemies, and gives one a text by which to explain the Faith to children of all ages without the Fold. Little children—especially boys—are perpetually inquisitive about the watch and chain their small statures can exactly attain. A religious medal at the outward end of that watch-chain will evoke from them a hundred questions, whose answers may be seeds springing up into life eternal. " Who is this ? Oh, I see ! It is Jesus. Why is He opening His breast and showing us His Heart ?"

Should such questions be left to be answered by the poor of our tenements, who have copper medals

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attached to their well-worn rosaries ? Is not the privilege too high to be lightly cast aside ? Cannot those who are richer in money both give and accept gifts that will show the faith that is in them ?

* * * * *

I turn to another gift, and I do so by lowering my chin some forty-five degrees so that it touches my scarf-pin. Well do I remember "the first time Cæsar ever put it on." It was at the parting of the ways, when the student went forth to earn bread, and the plain knot of black silk about his throat lacked the customary glint of metal. The gift was made by a gracious lady one morning after I had taught her two sons what they now could teach me—some French and some mathematics. I might write of its influence on my life what has been written concerning the medal. But it has also a history all its own.

The great mosque of Santa Sophia in Constantinople was never entirely despoiled of its Christian mosaics by the Moslems of 1453 and after. "There's a bell in Moscow," sings Father Prout, with sonorous irrelevancy,

"While on tower and kiosk-o
In Saint Sophia the Turkman gets,
And high in air
Calls men to prayer
From the tapering summit of tall minarets."

This *muezzin*, who intones his shrill "Allah il Allah" to true believers in the city by the Golden Horn, disdains not the piastres of the Giaour—the "infidel"—in my case the convert English parson who would visit the mosque to gather up from its

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floor as mementoes the mosaic *tessellæ* that come tinkling down from the deliberately neglected concave of the glorious, once Catholic dome. My friend (the father of my pupils) gathered up a handful of the coloured cubes, paid the *backsheesh* which overrides the Koran in the East, and had them made up by a Greek artificer into a gold-set brooch for his wife. Some pinches of the re-cut *tessellæ* remained over and above, and these the mosaic-worker fashioned into a tiny replica of a Byzantine Madonna and Child. The traveller had the little oval set up in gold as a scarf-pin, brought it home as a gift for some friend, and I was chosen as the happy recipient.

The gift was apt and was memorable—Oh, how full of fragrant memories! And thus it illustrates, I think, the twin qualities of the Catholic gift I find it easier to exemplify than to expound. But it also won me a whimsical adventure in the after-years that may be worth the telling before I pass onward.

About ten years ago I was second-in-command of a London weekly journal. One morning a quaint little elderly lady came into the office, after sending up her card, by which I learned that she was a musician most famous in Poland, in Germany, and at the Court of England. We had asked her through the post to write an article on a subject she knew by heart, and the English of the manuscript received a few weeks back had given serious trouble. We had "translated" the foreign turns of expression in which it abounded, and made them workaday English, trusting that the magic of a printed proof

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would win the author's acquiescence. Not so. Her visit that day was the first of many, in which she pleaded with tears for the restoration of each and every Continental solecism. Matters came to a deadlock. We had long since paid her the fee arranged, so that editor and eccentric *collaboratrice* could argue the purely literary side of the case on its merits. One day—it was perhaps the tenth or eleventh of her calls—she halted dead in the midst of a sentence. Her mobile face both softened and sweetened. She puckered her eyes upon me, as you have seen the short-sighted do when trying to focus a small and distant object. Suddenly she arose from her seat some paces away, and advanced reverentially towards the man she had just been scolding pretty thoroughly, till her brow and his were almost touching. While our heads thus bobbed together, she exclaimed: “Yess, it *iss*, it *iss*!” Some rapid words in Polish (I take it) followed.

“Oh!” she then continued, in the ingenuous patois we objected to in her article—“oh, mos’ cruel but not mos’ entirely discourteous, sir! Oh, sir! You are a client of Our Blessed Lady of Czenstochowa, an’ we are bruzzer an’ sister! An’ you *will* print ze article as I wrote him, word by word, is it not?”

I sat aghast. In another second she had pulled—but no Cisatlantic word may serve—she just *yanked* that scarf-pin from its resting-place, for minuter examination through a pair of reading-glasses, produced (to all seeming) from the back of beyond. Results were satisfactory, to judge by her delighted remarks in the tongue I conceive to have been

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Polish. Then she grew calmer, and told me of the profound devotion, not of Catholic Poles only, but of countless schismatic Russians, to Our Lady of Czenstochowa, the fortress-monastery between Warsaw and Cracow that has for centuries possessed the dark-coloured miraculous ikon.

"But this picture," I objected, as she handed it back to me—"this picture was put together by clever fingers in Constantinople."

"Oh, sir, *mos' naturally!*" she exclaimed in triumph. And then she recounted at a length that may readily be compressed how the "Black Virgin" revered by the Poles (and of which mine is an indubitable copy, as she proved by comparison with a small diptych hung to her *châtelaine*) is certainly of Byzantine origin, and was possibly painted by S. Luke; how it passed into the hands of St. Helena; found, subsequently, its way through a Russian Prince, Laon, to Belz in Galicia; and, finally, to the monastery of Czenstochowa, by the care of that holy place's founder, Prince Wadyslaw, Duke of Oppeln, who trusted in God's Mother to assist him against the Tartars. This Our Lady did, as the heroic records of Poland's strife against the "Yellow Peril" bear witness. In later years, when Luther (though dead) was prophet, and Charles Gustavus of Sweden his vizier, Our Lady of Czenstochowa gave the fortress-monastery of her migration the honour of being the only place in Poland to withstand victoriously the Swedish arms. This was in 1655, when the brave fighting monks, some seventy in number, with one hundred and fifty soldiers, successfully resisted a siege of thirty-eight

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days, carried on relentlessly by a Swedish force of ten thousand men.

Just bulged with thrilling Church history (which I have since found to be correct in every particular), what *could* I do in the matter of the "held-over" article? I capitulated. It appeared at an early date, and "as he was written"—more or less. The good public did not seem to mind. Our exchanges even quoted it approvingly, but their citations showed evidence of a blue pencil thrust more deeply into the snarls of the sentences than mine had dared.

The following week I received through the post from the author a pretty Polish print of Our Lady of Czenstochowa, all gilt and sombre rich colour. The covering letter assured me that I might now consider myself a member of the London "Society of Our Blessed Lady of Czenstochowa."

There were no obligations, which was perhaps as well, for Catholics should avoid unauthorized sodalities, of which this was assuredly the queerest, the smallest, and—upon my word!—the "swellest." Listen! There were but four other members, of whom two were Catholic and two were not. My advent, therefore, gave Mother Church a working majority of one, which was rather wasted, for there were never any meetings. Leaving aside the pianist-foundress and president, my fellow Catholic member was "John Oliver Hobbes"—the late Mrs. Pearl Mary Teresa Craigie, God rest her soul. The two Protestant "Sodalists" were ladies of the Royal House of England. I think it right to suppress the name of the elder of the two. Perhaps, how-

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ever, there can be no possible harm in saying that the younger is now Her Most Catholic Majesty, Queen Victoria of Spain.

I indeed revere Our Blessed Lady of Czenstochowa (pronounced *Chern-sto-hova*), but I am afraid theologians would define her London "Sodality" as something of a Lark.

To return. The apt and memorable Catholic gift is not less apt nor less memorable for affording us a little needed mirth, in addition to deeper and more abiding emotions. As a contrast, let me set forth the story of another of my small and treasured possessions, the giving of which was preceded by a dark tempest of righteous anger.

Thirty years ago most rural churches had difficulty in finding watchers for Sunday exposition of the Blessed Sacrament during the absorbing and digestive hours between High Mass and three. In my time small altar-boys (of whom I was one) were selected to keep Our Blessed Lord company while His older sheep were browsing at home.

Our devotional little church had formerly been the private chapel of an English noble family, and possessed on either side of the sanctuary two curtained alcoves, with preposterously cushioned seats, where my lord and his household could hear Mass in state. My lord died heirless, long before the democratic, almost Fenian, days we speak of. The succession passed into the Protestant line, and the "tribunes" (as the recesses were called) remained untenanted of Sundays, save on rare occasions when the parish priest had a guest to sleep in the house. I would gladly forget their existence, as evidencing

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the foibles no less than the devotion to Holy Church of the Catholic English squirearchy before the "second spring." But the one of them to the Gospel side has its place in the memories now being evoked.

There was Exposition from after the High Mass till the evening Benediction one Sunday in my ninth year. Another small altar-boy and I were allotted the watching from two to two-thirty. Each of us lived a mile or so out from the village, and we had just space to gratify hunger and then scamper back, don cassock and cotta, and relieve the more generous lads who had given up half of their dinner-hour to hungry prayers.

I am sure we meant to be as good as gold as each of us took Prayer-Book in hand, and knelt on his *prie-Dieu* before the lights and the flowers and the Veiled Presence in the monstrance. I can see that monstrance now—a silver angel upholding a rayed circlet, and within it the Most Holy. Remember, too, that we were both sons of exiles of the Irish Famine, and that all the talk at home turned on God and Ireland—on Faith and Fatherland. I truly believe that only the hastened meal, the run between the hedgerows, and the over-swift coming into the presence of Our Lord made us begin, all causelessly, to giggle.

We were alone in the church, which was replete with the almost palpable silence of Exposition hours. Thus each could hear the quasi-hysterical titter of the other, and our efforts to control ourselves made matters much worse. At last my companion rose, advanced to the centre of the sanctuary, genuflected

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in proper form—with both knees and head bowed—and approached me.

“There’s nothing to laugh at,” he whispered. “Our Lord’s looking at us. Let’s shut up.”

I acquiesced most willingly, for the laughter was humiliating, because uncontrollable, and physically distressing, too, being in each case violently repressed; yet, when the other boy went back to his prayer-stool, we giggled anew.

Should any kind Protestant reader chance to see these lines, I would ask him to consider our naughty behaviour as, at any rate, proof positive that we believed ourselves to be in the immediate presence of Our Lord. Boys do not giggle when they are *alone* and *unsupervised*, and in each other’s company, as we were, to all outward seeing. The reflex nervous action called “giggling” is inevitable at times with all highly-strung children, when they are brought before one who is far exalted above them, but whom they know they need not fear. Priests and Bishops are well aware of this fact, though teachers sometimes forget it. Perhaps the children whom the Apostles would have prevented from coming to Our Lord were giggling, but He knew their hearts; and perhaps, in that seemingly empty church, if we two boys had laughed our laugh outright, to have done with it, so that we then might fall to the prayer we really purposed, the Divine Lover of children would have overlooked the breach of rubric—and, indeed, of ordinary good manners.

Suddenly the curtain in the alcove on the Gospel side was drawn with a violent rattling of rings, and a grim figure extended a bony arm towards us. It

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was Miss O'Dwyer, the lady who acted as sacristaness. Some day I may put together a few notes in remembrance of her devout, eccentric, self-torturing life. Suffice it for the moment that she dressed as you see nuns dressed in illustrated Protestant fiction, with a hideous poke-bonnet and a black mantle ; that she had small private means, and took no fee for her highly-skilled sacristy labour ; that nobody—not even the parish priest—knew where she came from nor anything about her before her arrival in the district many years before ; finally, that she went to Confession with almost morbid frequency, but received Holy Communion only once a year, and then after a pitched battle of scruples with her director.

“ My ! ” as we boys would certainly have said afterwards, had the Stars and Stripes floated over our birthplace. How she did denounce us ! The old parchment face, with eyes that seemed burnt into it with red-hot iron rods, was contorted with annoyance and also with a nobler indignation. I hope never to hear in the next world the texts of Holy Writ—mostly from the Old Testament—she flung passionately, in the stillness of the sanctuary, at my companion's head and mine. In a way, we were grateful at the time. The explosion, and her presence, sufficed to steady our nerves, and we fell with relief to the Thirty Days' Prayer—a popular one among us lads at Expositions in the seventies, I remember, though why I know not. The whole incident lasted perhaps five minutes by the clock. It seemed five æons.

Months and months afterwards, on a Friday even-

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ing, when I was leaving home to serve at Benediction, my mother said to me : " Miss O'Dwyer has sent up word that she wants to see you in the sacristy after the service, alone and in private."

Perhaps my mother expected me to ask questions, for I found afterwards that she, dear heart, was completely in the dark as to why the black-robed female hermit of our Anglo-Irish community should throw off twenty years of reticence and desire to see any human being—especially a boy not ten years of age—" alone and in private." But my memory flew back like a hawk to that dreadful Sunday, and I spoke no word.

Midway to the church I met an altar-boy—not the one who had been my watch-companion. He gave me the same message as my mother had received. As I passed through the presbytery into the sacristy, the priest's housekeeper and her under-servant gave me successively the selfsame intimation. When Miss O'Dwyer herself came to hand me the well-kindled thurible, she asked me if I had received her messages, and confirmed them. It was all most perturbing. But for the fact that Miss O'Dwyer never spoke (save of sacristy matters) to a living soul in the village, I would have dreaded a tardy Nemesis on the next school-day—Monday—in the form of a double thrashing—a few cuts with a rod from my gentle father's reluctant hand, and a most thorough thrashing from my peppery school-master.

Benediction over, the acolytes filtered away, leaving me alone, and too fidgety to unvest, in the half-darkened sacristy. There was a shuffling of

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feet, and presently Miss O'Dwyer appeared, carrying something swathed in tissue paper. She began without prelude.

"I am an old woman," she said, "and I have never in all my life given a present to anybody. Perhaps it is because I have never had anybody to like. I thought I would go to my grave without liking any human being enough to make a present to him ; so I trust you will think a good deal of the present I am making you, my dear—the only one I have ever made. It is a book that has done me a great deal of good, long before you were born or thought of. Good-night."

That was all. I thanked her and fled, almost fearing that the parcel would scorch my unworthy fingers.

Arrived at home, when I cut the thin string and removed the crinkled paper, what do you think I found ? A neat, new copy of the Blessed Leonard of Port Maurice's golden treatise on the Mass—packed with pious anecdote, legend, and illustration—just the thing to give a flighty Irish boy. Above all, it is the one book to teach boys of any age how to hear Mass without a manual and with profit, in accordance with the four ends of sacrifice, by the convenient fourfold division which Blessed Leonard devised, and Father Matthew Russell has compressed into the well-known lines :

✓ *Adore* till the Gospel ; *give thanks* till the bell ,
Till Communion *ask pardon* ; then *all your wants tell*."

To hear Mass in this way it is not needful to know so much as the names of the *latreutic*, *eucharistic*,

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propitiatory, and *impetrative* Sacrifice. It more amply suffices to fulfil the ends the words connote, and the Blessed Leonard's little book can teach the simplest ploughman how to do it. My gift was a revelation to me. The prayer-books I had been brought up on addressed God our Father as if He were a Roman Emperor, or Louis Quatorze, or some boundless British magistrate.

I have tried to remember Miss O'Dwyer in my prayers at Mass ever since. She led so lonely a life till the end that but for the strange prescience of a half-witted old labourer whom she employed to run errands for her at her solitary lodgings she might have died without the priest. Her end was calm and happy, as is mercifully so often the case with scruple-tortured souls ; but in all my wanderings and researches (and these have not been few), never once have I met a human soul to give me tidings of the poor lady's kindred. In the very parish where she once toiled for the sanctuary, I doubt me if any remember her. The place has been submerged in the waves of monstrous London, and her name is known no more. Once, indeed, I heard an old worshipper say that the surplices were never so deftly pleated since Miss O'Dwyer died. But that was years ago.

I can never forget her. And if I write these words so baldly, it is to bring home to my own mind, as well as to yours, kind reader, the nobility of the apt and memorable Catholic gift.

The giving of such is a high privilege. It wins love in this life, and love beyond it, when the soul has sorest need of remembrance. It is a blinding

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of self-sacrifice and of the higher self-interest—the self-interest Our Lord commended when He bade us make unto ourselves friends of the Mammon of iniquity, that when we fail these may receive us into everlasting dwellings.

* * * * *

My inventory has not gone far. It comprises but three simple gifts, and has led me no further on a *voyage autour de ma chambre* than the corner of the table where I sit, with the Book and the Lamp beside me that started me on my travels ; yet what I have written must suffice. It has all been said much better by Thomas à Kempis : “ Prudens amator non tam donum amantis quam amorem dantis considerat ” (The wise lover esteemeth rather the love of the giver than the gift of the beloved). Gifts can be apt and memorable only when prompted by thoughtful affection.

Would the author of the “ Imitation ” have written rhapsodically of turkeys ? I trow not. He would approve us when our Catholic instincts bid us give missals, or breviaries, or sick-call cases, or chalices, or vestments, or needed money to our priests at Christmas. But the shaven head would have wagged annoyance over the Noël gifts we lay-folk interchange. When these are not edible, they too often take the form of gilt-edged slips of cardboard on which some printer has invoiced the donor’s mechanical compliments. Are there no seeing eyes left amongst us to defy convention—that incubus of the German revolt—and to divine by a Catholic instinct what other folks really need ?

I do not for a moment plead that all Christmas

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gifts should be devotional. Let them be of lasting good to the recipient in heart or soul or mind or body—or in all four. That is my plea. And that is why I make haste to add how far easier it is to choose apt and memorable religious gifts than secular ones.

The appalling mischief is that some good Catholic ladies (of all people) *will* choose such trumpery rosaries and trivial medals to give away. They would expect far better value and workmanship in the silver butter-knives presented to remoter acquaintances when they marry or have anniversaries. They certainly pay more for these latter perfunctory and uniform remembrances than for the medals that tarnish and the beads that break. Is gold too good for an emblem of Our Lord? Is not the purest silver cheap, as they know to their cost in Nevada? If a gift is to be memorable, its beauty must endure, for it should be a reflex of the giver's love.

As to friends in far corners of the earth, whose hourly needs we cannot ascertain, the safe gift is a new Catholic book of price, and the safest (if we may trust our Holy Father the Pope) is a year's subscription to some Catholic periodical they would otherwise never see.

We return where we started—to the gifts that have led us thus far—the Book and the Lamp. As has been said, the last page of the former recounts in Bishop Bradley's haunting words the spirit in which gifts should be given. I cannot deny myself the pleasure of transcribing them anew :

“Affection consists in the spirit which prompts us to love our friend as we do ourselves, and with

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the superior part of our soul—what the precept of charity requires, but in a more intensified and individual manner. That affection cannot be harmful which does not so occupy the mind as to interfere with duty ; which is, in its nature, what it should be ; which serves as a means to make us good.”

I glance at my watch, and then to my lamp, and prepare to hie me bedward. Some words of Portia’s mount up from remoter caverns of memory :

“ That light we see is burning in my hall :
How far that little candle throws his beams !
So shines a good deed in a naughty world.”

Precisely. Our gifts must be good deeds. As such they will bless both “ him that gives and him that takes,” to repeat other words of the same wise heroine. As such, again, they will abide beyond these voices. “ *Opera enim eorum sequuntur illos.*” Our gifts—our works—will follow us.

VI

THE MAKING OF AN ANARCHIST

IN his strong little novel, "The Reign of the Beast,"* the poet Adolphe Retté has given a lurid, a searing flame-picture of contemporary French Christlessness. His principal character (for the term "hero" scarcely fits) is Charles Mandrillat, a rich young man of much intelligence, whose schooling has been wholly secular. With that logical precipitateness and lack of Anglo-Saxon cobbler's-wax on their garments which sends all Frenchmen down the incline (once free-thinking teachers have edged them from the top of the spiritual toboggan-slide), Charles Mandrillat becomes a convinced and active anarchist, as inevitably as a tadpole develops into a frog.

We shall presently endeavour to follow him, stage by stage, through M. Retté's glasses—or, rather, eyes, for the poet-novelist, as readers of his "Du Diable à Dieu" are aware, himself travelled for years the downward path on which he has sent his chief *dramatis persona*.

The making of an Anarchist, as delineated by one

* "Le Règne de la Bête," par Adolphe Retté. Paris : Librairie Léon Vanier, 1908.

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who for years adhered to Anarchy, should do much to make us realize how inevitable the process is, once Christ has been banished from the school, the family, and the State. The Anarchist has a far grimmer *raison d'être* than that assigned to him, in a page of exquisite fooling, by Mr. Peter Finlay Dunne. He is no freak product of Mr. Dooley's Milwaukee beer and fretful discontent. He is a scientifically manufactured article, a century or more in the making, the first patent having been taken out in the year 1 of the French Revolution—of Our Lord, 1793.

Before accepting M. Retté's aid as an expert cicerone through the most up-to-date Anarchist factory, let us first of all survey the French Tower of spiritual and political Babel, to which it is the latest annex. In his third chapter,* the poet-convert materially aids us in this task.

Three or four generations have been needed in France to build up the fabric of a Godless, masterless, futureless society. To begin with, there were the false philosophers of the eighteenth century, who laid down as foundation that bed-rock of error, the "perfectibility of man," by unaided Nature. Poets—even Catholic ones—can use language when they are vexed, and M. Retté is no exception to the rule. He writes down among the most dangerous of the *philosophes* the "cross-grained, countrified madman, Rousseau." Each epithet (*acariâtre—bucolique—fou*) is entirely justified, as David Hume, the sceptic philosopher, could ruefully certify,†

* "Le Règne de la Bête," pp. 27 *et seq.*

† See Forster's "Life of Goldsmith," vol. i., *circa medium*.

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after the dance that Jean Jacques led him in the England of Johnson, Burke, and Goldsmith, whither the Scotsman had brought him for safety. The shores of Albion have ever lain open to the backwash of Continental thought, and *le fou bucolique et acariâtre* is at present doing more harm to British workmen (in cheap translations) than even Voltaire himself.

After Jean Jacques and the rest came the fanatics of St. Guillotine, the performers in the burlesque-funereal drama that we know as the French Revolution. In this the poor took little or no initiative. The whole upheaval was engineered by graft-hunters of the ambitious middle class—the *bourgeoisie*.

Next followed the builders up of *bourgeois* administrations. The motto of these worthies was eminently respectable in itself, so far as words can go. It might be roughly translated into our modern familiar phrase: "Government of the people, by the people, for the people." M. Retté prefers to put it thus: "Ceux-là prétendaient asseoir leur domination par le maintien de la plèbe dans le respect du principe d'autorité."

For a hundred years, however, the French cult of King Demos was as baseless as French homage to the odd monarchs who occasionally diversified his sway. Denying that any Government, whether republican or royal, has Divine sanction, and scoffing at the very notion that "he who resisteth the power resisteth the ordinance of God," French republican rulers sawed off the branch whereon they sat. In their mouths Abraham Lincoln's fine phrase became fatuity. They explicitly denied the super-

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natural source of authority ; they developed idolatry of the individual ; they fostered the equalitarian mania. The Church might have saved them, and given life and endurance to their polity. But it was ably subdued beneath their feet till it became (the words are M. Retté's) " a mere administrative mechanism, of which the clergy must oil the springs under State control."

The extremely natural consequence in modern French history has been this : that every dozen years or so political machinery has fallen all of a heap. In M. Retté's phrase, " French politics tumbled, like so many marionettes, whose wires had been cut by a humorous neurotic."

When the whole structure of nineteenth-century French Godless government had grown so worm-eaten that its timbers just held together by force of habit, the various carpet-bagging parties we read of in the cablegrams camped out upon it, like toadstools on rain-soaked woodwork. Other fungi as well took hold—the Hebrew and Masonic crowd, who are the bottle-holders of the *Bloc*. As M. Retté has it, " Alors la posterité des philosophes pullula." All of them clamour that their aim is " to regenerate humanity."

This rapid survey brings us to the present date, when Socialism, and its sure sequel, Anarchy, are perilously powerful in the Chamber, in Paris, and even in the provinces. We may now begin to study the manufacture of an individual Anarchist, but not before giving one short example of Adolphe Retté's amazing yet lawful use of invective :

" There are Socialists," he says, " who bake

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bricks in hell's oven, which they deem an electrode furnace of the very latest model. There are Anarchists who compound the axle-grease on which the hinges of hell-gate turn, thinking thereby that they are mixing mortar to build the temple in which man shall adore himself. The Tower has risen ; it is rising yet ; it will continue to rise till one breath of the Holy Spirit shall send it toppling headlong, and 'renew the face of the earth.' "

And now for the result of God's exile from too many French homes during quite a hundred years—the making of an Anarchist out of the gentle and intelligent Charles Mandrillat. I learned to know his type well in years when I taught young Frenchmen of his class to speak English. I could write a mournfully illustrative footnote to almost every paragraph Adolphe Retté has penned. But it will be best to let the poet-novelist speak for himself, with the sole gloss that Charles is supposed to be reviewing his life, as he returns from a stormy meeting with his worthless and extremely wealthy father :

" This interview aroused in Charles a host of sombre memories. As he made his way along the streets that led to his rooms, he recalled his sufferings from the day when he first became conscious of his own existence. With mournful distinctness his childhood arose before him—a childhood enslaved by pedants, whose bored voices ladled out to him scraps of tough knowledge. They had stuffed him with jumbled notions, 'according to the most recent discoveries of science'; above all, they had put him on his guard against Christian morality.

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In this manner he had learned that the Church exploits humanity by purring wild fables into its ears, and scaring it with a bogey named God. As for priests, he was assured that they constituted a society of evil-doers, whose wiles and cabals it was the chief aim of the Republic to unveil and frustrate.

"History was dished up with similar sauce. Charles was taught that the Revolution had inaugurated an era of universal happiness, in which all citizens at no distant date could spend their existence junketing amid endless victuals and perennial rivers of wine. When he asked to know what marvellous being presided over human evolution towards this unbounded Spree, he was told that its name was Progress. He salaamed respectfully to this idol, but could not refrain from remarking that no sign yet appeared of the Age of Gold held out to the digestive capacities of his contemporaries. And so he made inquiry as to the magic spell-words by which such beneficent wizardry could be made to come to pass. He was duly shown the device, 'Liberty, Equality, Fraternity,' as painted on every blank wall. Charles admired the inscription much, but at the same time he took note of several things, among them the following: There were people around him guilty of the crime of possessing no home, and being thrust into prison in consequence; also, (he observed), if an illiterate cobbler's vote had the same electoral power as the ballot-paper of a wholesale boot-manufacturer with a University degree, the former was dieted on scraps from the pork-butcher, washed down with absinthe, while the latter could combine the most savoury

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products of the animal and vegetable kingdom on his menu. Charles felt the difficulty, also, that at boarding-school the stronger boys bullied the weaker, especially on days when the latter had won first places by compositions in which the immortal principles of 1789 and the mollified manners they engendered were the theme of glorification. As a result of all which, he began to suspect that the fetish-words, *liberty*, *equality*, *fraternity*, were, perhaps, just Bluff.

"He submitted the result of these self-communings to one of his professors, who went red in the face with rage, attacked Charles as an impertinent cross-questioner, and gave him the 'Rights of Man' to copy out twenty times as a punishment.*

"Charles was appalled. Ever since he was weaned he had been taught to consider private judgment the chief article of the Rights of Children.

"Nevertheless, he fulfilled his imposition, handed it to his mentor, and ventured timidly to ask why war yet persisted among the nations, although divers philanthropists were counselling peace with touching perseverance. He was assured that this state of affairs was a relic of barbaric ages, and would speedily disappear beneath the influence of wireless telegraphy, of airships, and of speeches made at the Hague by a certain French anti-clerical swell.†

"Although not convinced, Charles asked no

* Much of this is assuredly autobiographical. See the earlier chapters of Retté's "Du Diable à Dieu."

† "Un certain Pot dit Latourelle des Brisants."—"Règne de la Bête," p. 68. Outside Bloc circles in France M. des Brisants is little known.

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further questions. By way of reward for his silence, some Plutarchs among his professors—specialists in this kind of whitewashing—dinned into his ears the praises of those Phocions and Aristides who had founded the French Republic, or were now upholding it. His masters built a Pantheon for the boy, in which the affable Robespierre hobnobbed with Marat, that gentle physician—a little too fond of bleeding, perhaps, but so nobly inflamed with the fires of Jacobinism.

“ The virtues of the law-givers of 1848 were next detailed to him. Finally came the heroes brought forth by Marianne III.,* the Jew-loving Crémieux, and Gambetta, the latter imported expressly from Genoa to utter that exalted battle-cry : ‘ Clericalism, there is our enemy ! ’

“ To set the coping-stone on so many fine teachings, and to prove that German metaphysics are the aptest wherewith to form a young Frenchman’s heart and mind, his professors went all the way to Königsberg to scratch the corpse of Kant, and extract therefrom the following rule of life : Charles must always so demean himself that his acts might serve as examples, and merit the approbation of a mysterious divinity who consented to be labelled ‘ The Imperative Category.’

“ Having fulfilled their task, the pedagogues withdrew, laden with flattering testimonials ; and Charles inaugurated his dawning manhood with the publication, at his own expense, of a dithyrambic ode (of untrammelled metre, as was befitting), in which,

* *I.e.*, the Third Republic, familiarly dubbed “ Mary Ann ” in France, from the female head on the coinage.

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paraphrasing some famous sayings, he upheld the revolt of the individual against oppressive laws, and proclaimed it the holiest of duties.

"By the way, this was the first time in his life that Charles had used the word *duty*. Until then he had been taught only of *rights*. The antithesis between all the 'rights' in which he was steeped and the 'duty' he had discovered pleased him very much indeed.

"This education, then, compact of pompous and poisonous formulas, had warped his judgment without as yet hardening his heart ; for he suffered from a great need of affection, which in the nature of things could not be appeased at home.

"His mother was too wholly absorbed in her *compôtes* and *entremets* to see signs of distress in her only child's eyes. All she could give him was a mechanical kiss from time to time, with the promise of some nice things to eat, whereas the boy really went to her to beg a little love. As to his father, Charles speedily understood that there was nothing to be expected in that quarter. The great man was too deeply plunged in graft, with all its underground intrigues. For weeks at a time he took no more notice of Charles than if the lad were not in the world ; or, if he became aware of his existence, he put preposterous questions concerning his studies, paid no heed to the replies, and left the room exhorting the tutor to arm the boy well against the Church's 'obscurantism.'

"Neither could Charles feel any attachment for the desiccated pedant who looked after him. On the other hand, he was revolted by the manners of

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his fellow-students, noisy young vulgarians, given up to the sporting papers and photographs of popular actresses. Thrown upon himself, he formed the habit of sealing hermetically in the depths of his heart both his dreams and his disgust. He affected calm and reserve, although inwardly he was burning to lay bare his ardent soul. This volcano within, with its crater masked by ice, so ravaged his mind that it became practically impossible for him to speak otherwise than in terms of irony. Moreover, the life he had hoped for, and the world as it was unfolding itself before him, lay leagues asunder.

"He was not slow in perceiving that all the high-flown tributes to the glory of democracy, whose echoes were rumbling around him, served to hide uncommonly grim realities. After studying the talkative adventurers who, like his father, waxed fat on the scum of politico-financial pools, and noting their vilenesses and treasons, he could but compare the Republic to a pirate craft cruising by every harbour whence treasure-galleons emerged.

"The sourest disdain of these buccaneers gnawed his heart, and then he felt hatred for the whole *bourgeois* society which tolerated their rapine more or less complacently, being wholly steeped in materialism.

"He conceived some hope of reconquering his early ideal on the day when Anarchist theories first appealed to him. He was speedily undeceived. Among these self-styled wrong-redressers he found only chimerical dreamers, or astute defrauders of the poor. Yes; these Don Quixotes, who were ever feigning to ride at large in pursuit of justice, were no more than Sancho Panzas, whose realm was a

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sty, with troughs middling full of swill—turgid mountebanks like Greive, crackers of empty nuts like Jean Sucre, splenetic vendors of revolutionary vitriol like Jourry.*

“ This last disillusion awakened in Charles’s soul destructive instincts bred there by the contrast between the sophisms his youth was fed upon, and the perverse misdeeds of the politicians now bestializing France under the colour of teaching her the Republican virtues. Pitilessly he rent into shreds the systems that had for some time attracted him ; then, when they lay tattered before him, he had a fierce glee in beholding so much ruin.

“ ‘ Men,’ he said, ‘ are unclean and gluttonous apes ? But I ? Do I resemble them ? ’

“ It was then that the demon of pride entered into him, and ceased not to whisper his darksome counsels.

“ ‘ See,’ said the Devil, ‘ thou art pent up in an unfathomable cavern, whose granite vault groweth ever lower as thou advancest. As thou gropest and feelest those who swarm and crawl beside thee in the dark, thou knowest them for misshapen animals. Thou knowest the incurable madness of this herd of wallowers. Thou knowest from within and without what they term the Good and the Evil. Thou art not made to stifle beneath the débris wherewith they encumber thy dungeon. So be it, then. Send forth thy thunderbolt, and prove in so doing, as thou

* A defect of Adolph Retté’s first novel is that a wealth of contemporary satire makes parts of it read like a political pamphlet. But what a pamphlet ! Retté is far from being a Royalist, by the way. He has little but merited scorn for certain “ Society ” Catholics in Paris.

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smitest these human counterfeits, that thou art their Overman, for—know it well—men admire those alone who whip and spurn them. They will write thy name in their annals, and thou shalt be like unto God !

“ Greedily Charles listened to the traitorous Voice. Thoughts of murder burst down in black cataracts over his soul. He took pleasure in conceiving himself a dispenser of ruin, who should affright all peoples with one gesture of his avenging hand.

“ ‘ Ah ! ’ he exclaimed, ‘ would that I might fire the dynamite charge that should send this globe in shivers to the stars ! ’ ”

* * * * *

For the development of this sombre yet most hopeful book I must send all readers of French to the readily-procurable original. I hope, too, that they will buy, and not borrow it, for even poets must live, and Adolphe Retté has tossed aside worldly prospects to take up the cross and fight for Our Lord while following Him. There are so many myriad chances to be good in this redeemed world that even literary log-rolling may be virtuous if done *pour le bon motif*.

I commend to all Catholic readers who know the tongue of the “ Eldest Daughter of the Church ” this work of a poet who does not despair of his motherland ; whose own fine intellect (by the grace of God) has revolted against the foes that beset her, and who has printed on his title-page, for all to read, high words that never more than now should be learned by all rulers of Christendom : “ Unless the Lord keep the city, he watcheth in vain that keepeth it.”*

* Ps. cxxvi. 2.

VII

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“And the beasts of the earth shall be at peace with thee.”—JOB v. 23.

“THESE English,” said observant Froissart, “take their pleasures sadly.” The Reformation has come and gone since the words were written, and has left things rather worse. These English take their hobbies seriously, in the twentieth cycle of redemption. If they begin by keeping canaries, for instance, they end by worshipping them.

I knew a non-Catholic lady once who had her dead canary stuffed, and prayed to it. When I remonstrated, she passed on to me the jargon-word of the hour, as an all-sufficing explanation: “It is my mascot,” she said. I suggested that if she must needs be an idolater (as she honestly believed me to be, through my “Romish” education), she should pray to some graven image of Our Lord, which I offered to supply if she would make the substitution. She promised, and I procured her a small silver medal of the Sacred Heart. I was glad, some weeks afterwards, to find the dead dicky-bird lying upside down in a remote pigeon-hole of

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her desk, when helping her to hunt for something else. (We were colleagues on a secular magazine.) I noted, too, that the medal snapped on her bangle had exorcised from that silver circlet a host of expensive abominations—small figures of dogs and other pet animals (including pigs !), which she had been wont to adore, and even consult in times of trouble. I have lost sight of this strange, rather clever woman, but I hear that she now goes often to Catholic churches, and has had my little gift blessed by the Holy Father, through the kind offices of some friend in Rome.

About fifteen years ago English animal-worshippers, who had made a religion out of their most amiable pastime, stood aghast when Monsignor John Vaughan (now Bishop of Sebastopol, and auxiliary to Dr. Casartelli) insisted in print on the philosophical truth of the statement that, technically speaking, animals have no rights. People forgot, or were unaware, of the clear teaching of the Church, which enforces full measure of kindness to the brute creation under pain of sin. Whether animals have "rights" or no, in the philosophical sense, one Catholic truth has stood like stone in the froth and bubble of the ages ever since Apostolic days, when St. John the Beloved Disciple, and the guardian of Our Lady, made a pet of a partridge. *God's rights of sovereignty are supreme*, and whoso infringes them by inflicting unnecessary pain on so much as one of these sparrows that fall from heaven offends God our Father, because "not one of them is forgotten" before Him.*

* Luke xii. 6.

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Animal-torturers, also, deal death to their own souls, for they are serving a novitiate of cruelty, like the Roman Emperor who practised on flies, and perfected his demoniacal work in maturer years on Christian martyrs.

All that the scholastic premise—*Animalia non habent jura*—really means, may be compressed into an illustration. The turkey has no "rights" as against the man with the axe, when the latter deems him ready for table use. *Non habet jus*. He may have *jus*, of which the genitive is *jussis*, for that means gravy or soup; but of *jus*, *juris*—whence our word "jurisprudence"—he is devoid. Now, you or I, kind reader, have a right that is denied to the turkey; and in case of necessity we are not only permitted, but expected, to exercise it. Thus, if either of us were cast on a cannibal island, and the chief regarded our *entrée* in the culinary sense possessed by that curious French word, we should have a right to protest—with a Winchester rifle, if possible.

If the tone of flippancy has crept in, it is perhaps the result of talking at certain folks according to their folly. Some animal-adorers tire one's patience, for they have been reiterating for some years that "the Catholic Church does not teach kindness to animals," ever since Bishop Vaughan's misunderstood statement. Really, there are latter-day "humanitarians" whose talent for blinking Catholic doctrine amounts to genius. Their sympathies seem wholly concentrated in those whom they term "our dumb friends," far less aptly and nobly than St. Francis of Assisi—

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"He who in his Catholic wholeness used to call the very flowers

Sisters, brothers, and the beasts whose pains are hardly less than ours."

Their perpetual repetition of the word "dumb," indeed, has always struck one dog-lover as humourless since the day when he accidentally trod on a favourite puppy's tail. "Jip" was fluent, even rhetorical; but I apologized, and she forgave me. Dogs do forgive so readily, and with such swift affection, do they not? One feels abashed before their oblivion of injuries, deliberate or fortuitous. "Plus on apprend à connaître l'homme," says Toussenel, "plus on apprend à estimer le chien."

The Church, then, has ever taught kindness to animals. The two great Books of which she is divinely-appointed custodian stamp this on the memory of each Catholic child so soon as he is able to read. The Old Testament gives us, in what may be called its opening picture, a view of the completed creation. Adam and Eve are depicted for us, in the midst of a beauteous garden, amid all birds and beasts that God had given them as subjects—subjects submissive to the will of wise and tender sovereigns. Looking into this picture as saints and doctors have shown us, with great Catholic painters following in their train, we see Eve stroking the lion, while the great beast arches his back with pleasure. Strange creatures, no longer known to man save in the fossil collections of our museums, pay homage to the monarchs of creation, as they hold court in the splendour of the faery realms God has set them to govern. The

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Eternal Father Himself walks with them in paradise, "at the afternoon air," taking pleasure in His work.

This opening picture—or, as we may say, this illustrated frontispiece—of Holy Writ sets forth the entire hierarchy of existence, from the meanest of irrational creatures to the Eternal and Increate Wisdom. We are shown the bright earth itself, and the "paradise of pleasure," given to our first parents most completely, but also, as the Sacred Text says, "to all beasts of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to all that move upon the earth, and wherein there is life, that they may have to feed upon." God is above all, and we seem to catch glints of angel wings in every sunbeam that pierces the perfumed shades, but our attention is held by man, constituted in original justice, and upon countless lowlier beings docile to him. It is a Divine picture, of flawless harmony, of varied but ordered beauty.

Too soon came the Fall and the dread primal curse. Man had proven an unworthy king, and his subjects mutinied. Henceforth his reconquest of dominion must be slow, and painful, and partial. Each "beast of the earth" now obeys new and diverse laws of species, and instincts no longer uniformly mollified by an all-governing Beneficence. There is mistrust between rulers and ruled. Only in some of the gentler creatures can one divine, as it were, a vague desire to renew primordial fealty.

There is a moment of truce at the Deluge. The beasts lay their enmities aside, at the command of God and by the instinct of self-preservation, and

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advance processionally into the Ark at Noe's bidding. Yet even the rainbow of peace that hangs in the sky as they emerge cannot exorcise their aloofness, their fear, their hostility. The rift made by sin in God's work of creation has not been closed. So far as concerns "the beasts whose pains are only less than ours," that rift will ever abide. But it will be bridged over in many a pleasant place, and will everywhere gape less widely, less cruelly. For Christ Our Lord will come to restore His Father's work; Justice and Peace will kiss, and their embrace will bring joy to the lowliest creatures.

And so the New Testament of good tidings, like the Old, begins with a touching and consoling picture—the Bethlehem Crib.

Here all of us who have had the good fortune to be born Catholics are shown, from our infancy upwards, the first hours of the babyhood of God made man for us—of the Divine Infant Who was fain to receive the hospitality of the humblest animals, more courteous than "His own," to whom He came, but who received Him not.

Ancient tradition, rather than Holy Writ itself, shows us a group of many mild beasts in this picture—the ox and the ass within, the shepherds' dogs and flocks, and the Magi's camels without. The little cavern and its precincts are Paradise regained. Very soon they will extend to the farthest bounds of the earth, wheresoever humanity's own free-will permits. For the moment all ennobled and redeemed creation is pressed into the picture. Man is there, in the person of the dear St. Joseph and the rest, but most of all in the Sacred Humanity

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of the new Adam Himself. The new Eve, the Immaculate Mother of us all, is with her First-born. And the lowliest animals are set in this high company, at the baby feet of God the Son made man for us :

“ For the dear God Who loveth us,
He made and loveth all.”

The animals of the Crib reappear in Holy Gospel, especially the ass, that burden-bearer of all the Orient—a four-footed pattern of patience and toil and resignation. It is he who carries the Divine Child to Egypt, and brings him back when Herod has gone to an account. He bears the sacred burden again—now grown to man's estate—amid the hosannas of Palm Sunday. He was specifically announced for this task in Messianic prophecy. And, indeed, to revert for an instant to the Old Law, he had an ancestor who was given human speech, wherewith to reprove his master, the Prophet Balaam. The only creature to share with the ass the mournful glory of rebuking wrongdoing in man is the cock, which in the Divine design was bidden to crow the very moment St. Peter lost courage the third time. Chanticleer's effigy has adorned the summit of our weather-vanes ever since. One ought not to be able to seek from these the quarter in which the wind lies without making an act of humility.

Our Blessed Lord's preaching abounds in animal metaphors. He compares the feather-brained dwellers in Jerusalem to chickens, Himself to the mother-hen. He holds forth the example of the birds of the air, who gather not into barns, yet their

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Heavenly Father feedeth them. He bids His disciples combine the wisdom of the serpent with the simplicity of the dove. He is the Good Shepherd, who goes in quest of the lost sheep. Three of the four holy evangelists who have recorded these words are blazoned in the sacred heraldry of the Church as animals, St. Mark being symbolized by the lion, St. Luke by the ox, St. John by the eagle.

Pious popular tradition, which the Church neither confirms nor condemns, has surrounded the Crucifixion with a wealth of exquisite bird-lore. In the legends all winged creatures wheel in the air about their dying Lord. The story of the robin is familiar to all. In one version the little "friend of man" goes to draw the nails and wounds himself. In another he tries to wipe the blood from Our Lord's brow with his wings. In either case his reward is the same—to carry for all time a hallowed blood-stain on his breast. A kindred legend attaches in Germany to the cross-bill, which twisted its beak trying bravely to loosen the nails and the crown of thorns. French mothers tell their children that the swallow pecked away some of the thorns, and find a resemblance in the low cooing of the turtle-dove to "Kyrie, Kyrie," as legend says that she murmured in compassion, perched upon an arm of the Cross.

But the Christian bird-lore of the Crucifixion would require a treatise. Let us move onward from the Cross to those who have borne it after Christ throughout the centuries. We shall find, on firmer authority than that of tales "such as the wholesome mothers tell their boys," that the Saints

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possessed the key, not only of the heavenly Paradise, but of the terrestrial Eden also, as far as friendship with animals could admit them.

Christian maidens in the amphitheatre resumed and wielded anew Eve's fallen sceptre. Lions, tigers, and panthers forgot hunger and ferocity in presence of these early martyrs. They crouched at their feet, and even fawned upon them, like great cats who read goodness in their eyes. The beasts were goaded onward to the assault, but we read again and again of cases where they balked, and even turned and rent their more savage keepers, leaving the martyrs to be despatched by the sword.

In later Church history innumerable Saints have asserted and exercised this friendly dominion of man over beast, as ordained in God's primitive harmony of "all the things that He had made," into which we know that He looked and saw that they were very good.

Being the closest followers of Christ, the Saints had the richest share of His gifts. Our Lord promised not only the Apostles, but all worthy disciples possessed of heroic faith, the amazing power of working yet greater miracles than He Himself had deigned to perform. *Majora horum faciet.* The Saints, again, reconquered primeval innocence by penance and purity; their holy obedience, too, was an ever-abiding expiation of Adam's sin, being intimately united to that of Him Who was made "obedient, even unto death." What wonder that they resumed the suzerainty of Adam over the brute creation—that they revived, as it were, a title in abeyance?

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Two thousand years before the redemption (or, in Dr. Challoner's computation, about fifteen hundred) there was a veiled prophecy of this in the words spoken by Eliphaz to the just man Job : " But thou shalt have a covenant with the stones of the lands, and the beasts of the earth shall be at peace with thee." Majestically has this promise been fulfilled in the lives of the great host of Saints.

There is no question that animal life enshrouds a mystery which it has not pleased God to reveal. To take only the problem of pain endured by brutes : such suffering in ourselves is a gainful matter of scourge and flail. But, as a poet sings, " In brutes 'tis wholly piteous."

The Saints seem to have read this mystery, though they have not been permitted to utter its solution before the time in words that we can decipher. A French writer says : " Or, ce mystère, les Saints l'ont lu au regard des bêtes étonnées de la méchanceté des hommes, et qui ont l'air de vouloir noyer Caïn dans les lacs tranquilles de leurs yeux."* Mystic or missionary, hermit or Apostle, maiden, wife, or widow, the Saints have loved *all* in God's work, and have therefore loved animals. Imitation of this love goes far to solve the mystery, whose full solution may safely be left till hereafter. Love of God, indeed, is a key to most mysteries, and opens the lock more or less well according to its strength. But, when made of true metal, it never fails at the lowest to set the gates ever so little ajar.

The Saints, then, loved animals, because they

* Léon Bloy, in "La Femme Pauvre." See Paul Franche's introduction to "La Légende Dorée des Bêtes."

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loved God. This was their supernatural and most solid motive, as it must remain ours. Also, they hungered and thirsted after justice, and so shared the human feeling which made Toussenel write his partly-true aphorism : " If we would have animals come to us, we must begin by affording them an example of righteousness." Doubtless, too, the obscure yet beautiful words of St. Paul in the eighth chapter of his Epistle to the Romans weighed with the Saints : " For the expectation of the creature waiteth for the revelation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him that made it subject, in hope. Because the creature also itself shall be delivered from the servitude of corruption, into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. For we know that every creature groaneth and travaileth in pain, even till now." To add wantonly to this suffering, to multiply this mysterious groaning and travail without the justest cause, is to abase man's dignity, and at the same time to arrogate, in a sense, God's sovereignty. The Saints would have us remember that we are creatures.

So they both taught us and showed us how to love animals. In return, all animals loved them. Not one particle of love is lost in this world. It is as indestructible as men of science teach us that matter and energy are.

A young Frenchman, named Louis, gave St. Philip Neri two little birds, which the Apostle of Rome consented to keep, on condition that the young man came daily to feed them and clean their cage. One day, when Louis came to do this, he

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found St. Philip ill in bed, with the two birds fluttering round him, perching on his head, and singing sweetly. It was with difficulty that they could be got to leave him, and then only when the Saint bade them enter the cage, which he told Louis to hold close to the bed. This reminds one of the liberties the wild birds round Rome used to take with St. Philip's old Capuchin friend, St. Felix, under whose bushy beard they would creep and hide securely as he walked along.

A lay friend of St. Philip's, a rich Roman gentleman, had complained that the Saint, in his zeal for souls, had persuaded several of his attendants to leave his service and enter religious Orders. One morning, when he went to San Girolamo to pay St. Philip a visit, he took with him a huge dog named Capriccio, to whom he was much attached, and who had every reason to be fond of his master, for he was a much petted and pampered animal. Capriccio at once took the greatest fancy for the Saint, and nothing would persuade him to leave him. His master put a collar round his neck, and dragged him home ; but the moment he was free, away he raced to San Girolamo. The Saint sent him back, but it was of no use, for he always returned the moment his chain was taken off. His owner was very much annoyed, and tried to bribe the dog to remain by feeding him on every sort of dainty, whereas bits of dry bread were all he got from St. Philip. At last Capriccio's master, seeing that nothing could be done, had to resign himself to the loss of his favourite.

" Father Philip is not content with robbing me of

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my men," he said ruefully, "but must needs rob me of my animals also!"

Capriccio throve in holy company, and lived fourteen happy years with St. Philip and his disciples, to the rather chastened joy of the latter, for the humorous Saint (by way of teaching them obedience and humility) was wont to make them carry the big dog in their arms through the streets of Rome, and even to wash and comb him in public!

Needless to say that, like all the Saints, St. Philip detested anything in the shape of cruelty to animals. One day, as he was walking across the courtyard of the Oratory, a Father who was with him trod purposely on one of the bright little lizards which are always darting about from stone to stone in the warm sunshine of the South. The gentle Saint felt very angry.

"Cruel man!" he exclaimed, with holy indignation. "What harm has that poor little animal done to you?"

Another day he saw a butcher wound a dog with his knife when driving it away from his meat. This troubled the Saint so much that he could not get over it for the rest of the day. When he was sent for, as he often was, in the carriage of one of his richer friends, he made a point of telling the coachman, as he rattled through the narrow streets, to take the greatest care not to run over or injure any animal which came in his way, still less, of course, any child or infirm person. We live in a "humanitarian" age, but the reports of accidents in the daily papers leave little ground for hope that

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modern passengers in borrowed automobiles impress such advice on the chauffeur's mind.

I have taken the above illustrations of a Saint's "reconquest of the terrestrial Eden" from a captivating little book, entitled "Pippo Buono," issued anonymously, but edited by Father Ralph Kerr, of the London Oratory. His name, and the Archbishop of Westminster's imprimatur, are a guarantee that the incidents can be found in the authoritative and contemporary biographies of St. Philip by Capecelatro and others, to which I now have not access.

Nor, perhaps, is there strict necessity for quoting big books to Catholic readers, or to give so much as a single reference to the vast "Acta Sanctorum," throughout the whole of whose volumes friendly birds and beasts go romping with God's Saints, hand in hand, we might say, if strict language permitted. Why "preach to the converted," indeed, who have learned in childhood of St. Benedict's crows at Monte Cassino, of St. Gregory's cat, St. Conrad's spider, St. Martin's goose, St. Francis Xavier's crab, St. Francis de Paula's pet trout ("Antonella"), St. Rose of Lima's rooster, St. Carelefus's tame wild-ox, St. Anthony's pig,* St. Hervé's wolf (and St. Francis of Assisi's), St. Florent's jackass, and Brother Bear who attached himself to the Irish Abbot St. Gall in a German forest, and lived "monastically" till he followed his master's body to the grave? Why prolong the

* The reference is not to the beloved Saint of Padua, who preached to the fishes, but to St. Anthony of the Desert.

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list? To complete it were to unload the Ark, and catalogue its cargo—a cargo divinely selected.

None of us, then, can be a good Catholic unless he both sedulously cultivates and practises the greatest kindness to all animals. I was profoundly interested, some years ago, to read the following, in a letter from a Catholic friend—one of the manliest men I know—soon after the death of Peter, his favourite cat :

“ He was as noble and as lovable as an animal can be. Born in 1883, Peter lived to the March of 1898, and died in my hands, a baby kitten again, talking and answering me as of old. It was a few minutes *lived* in the past between us again, with all its memories alive. One would like to think that all living animals have their little bit of *real* happiness in a hereafter before their final effacement, as a reward for the trials and troubles they undergo in life while subject to the dominion of man. I cannot myself imagine or bring myself to believe that they have souls,* which would mean an eternal hereafter, but I should like to hope for a reward for them, especially for my Peter. It would seem justice that it should be so.”

These words of reverent speculation were written to me in 1899. As I then solicited and obtained permission to publish them in a journal I helped to conduct, I may fairly give the author's name. They are from the pen of Mr. Louis Wain, the animal painter and humorist.

We may safely leave the mystery of animal suffer-

* The writer, of course, means *intellectual* and *spiritual* souls, which alone are *immortal*.

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ing and its possible compensation in the hands of God, Who "despiseth none of the things which He hath made." No, not one. "Shall I not spare Ninive," He Himself exclaims, in the last lovely sentence of the Prophecy of Jonas, "that great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand persons that know not how to distinguish their right hand and their left, *and many beasts ?*"*

* Jonas iv. 11.

VIII

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SEVENTEEN years ago Pope Leo XIII. wrote: "Some remedy must be found, and found quickly, for the misery and wretchedness pressing so heavily and unjustly at this moment on the vast majority of the working classes."

The means of cure insisted on by the great Pope, who was most wrongfully termed a "Socialist," lay along the lines of Social Reform.* The nostrum that finds favour with the enemies of Christ and His Church is known as Socialism. All mental confusion will be saved if we keep the two most rigidly apart. Socialism implies that a country, and the whole machinery of production, distribution, and exchange within that country, shall belong compulsorily to the State — that is to say, *to* the whole people, for use *by* the whole people, and *for* the whole people.

Surely a desperate and chimeric remedy for what

* Throughout this paper "Socialism" is taken in its exact sense of Collectivism, the doctrine of all Socialist leaders. "Social Reform" connotes the duty of Christian justice to our neighbour, as enjoined in the Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, Seventh, Eighth, Ninth, and Tenth Commandments.

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Pope Leo has elsewhere called "the callousness of employers and the greed of unrestrained competition." But Europe has known many years of Christless education, and we must be prepared for all manner of pills to cure universal earthquakes, when the Devil wields pestle and mortar. For this introduction of the Evil One's name much more than adequate apology will be afforded when we say a word later of Socialist views on Christian marriage.

Socialism began in days of heathenness, before ever Plato took pen to write the "Republic." Karl Marx revived it in the midst of the paganism that was the trail of Luther's baleful career. Social Reform (though not unknown in the Old Law) may be said to have begun with the Life of our Life—with the earthly career of Him Who went about in Palestine, "doing good to all men."

Socialism of its nature is bound to end, as did the doomed cities of Reggio and Messina, in earthquake, reducing all to much the same level of penury, while according full opportunity to those stronger in nerve and physique to plunder at railway-stations the portmanteaux of weaker brethren. Social Reform, being builded on the Rock which is Christ, will endure until the end of time, seeming often to fail, but ever renewing its struggle. It will build up the world anew, after no matter how many cataclysms, as Christian charity is rebuilding the churches of southmost Italy. For "Social Reform" is but another name for the charity of Christ that "presseth us." Socialism, we read *ad nauseam*, is to cure all ills of purse that human flesh is heir to. One has yet to learn that these saviours of mankind

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have sent a commensurate cheque to sufferers in Calabria, though they number some wealthy men—some even of the preposterously and incongruously rich—in the forefront of their militant ranks. The amazing meanness of prosperous Socialists in hours of public disaster may not strike readers as an adequate refutation of their economic theories. To me, I admit, it is sufficing. “By their fruits ye shall know them.”

Modern Socialism has been with us since the days of Marx ; it has had countless opportunities for coming to the aid of suffering humanity ; it is a rich and closely organized body at headquarters ; and it has sedulously evaded each and every opportunity of proving to the world that its adherents believe in community of wealth.

The Social Reform of Christ and of His Vicar's great Labour Encyclical on the condition of the working classes (*Rerum Novarum*, May 15, 1891) does not—cannot—condone the compulsory community of wealth. As Catholics are aware, the Social Reform to which we are pledged by Our Lord, and by His inerrant Vicars on earth, explicitly proclaims the right of a man to his own. Hear Pope Leo : “When a man,” he writes, “turns the activity of his mind and the strength of his body towards procuring the fruits of Nature, by such act he makes his own that portion of Nature's field which he cultivates—that portion on which he leaves, as it were, the impress of his individuality ; and it cannot but be just that he should possess that portion as his very own, and have a right to hold it without anyone being justified in violating that right.”

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The poor man's ewe-lamb is "his very own." There we have the Catholic position in a nutshell. No earthly monarch, whether King David or King Demos, has a vestige of right to steal the creature and turn it into the royal pastures, talk he never so wisely of "economic" necessities. God's messenger will say to each adherent of the power thus abusing its strength, "Thou art the man," and punishment must follow. The Biblical parallel is almost painfully apt, for the fouler Socialistic sheets print more of the "duty" incumbent on the State of stealing Bethsabee from Urias, and their children from both, than of the righteous "communizing" of the one ewe-lamb that figures so forcibly in the Prophet Nathan's apologue.

Private ownership has ever been lawful, is lawful now, and cannot but ever remain so. The Catholic Church is bound to this assertion, as she is to all other fundamental truths. Yet she is also bound to the doctrine that the rich man, while owning his gold as completely as I own the poor pen with which these lines are traced, has an even more terrible responsibility for the use to which he puts the precious metal. The gold is one man's; the pen is another's. If justly acquired fortune be taken compulsorily from the millionaire, or his only fountain-pen from the writer, each of them has been done a manifest wrong which must be redressed in this world, or in the world to come, should the evil-doer be impenitent.

Yet, though the actual possession of the gold (as of the pen) is inalienable while rightful, the *use* of either is a stewardship of which account must

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be rendered to the uttermost farthing. The great Père de Ravignan was wont bluntly to tell his rich penitents in Paris that as doctors are sent into this world to heal, and lawyers to plead, so the wealthy are sent to give. That is their mission, their practical *raison d'être*. In so saying he was but handing down the torch which has flamed in the Christian Church from its dawn, long centuries before St. Thomas Aquinas had laid down in so many words the universal doctrine of Christian tradition—that the rich man, while the *possessor* of his goods *by justice*, is no more than their temporary *custodian* (or steward) *by charity*.

The Church's position in that Socialistic controversy which has now assumed such vast proportions may be yet more clearly illustrated than by the analogies of pen and purse, which must now be dismissed as follows: The appallingly gifted Frenchman, Arouet, who chose to be known as Voltaire, was the indubitable and lawful owner of the goosequills, ink, and paper with which he chose to write:

“ The books, decreed to lasting shame,
Which those who read are careful not to name ;
These won to vicious act the yielding heart,
And then the cooler reasoners soothed the smart.”*

In the days of her power the Catholic Church would have regulated Monsieur Arouet's *use* of the small implement which *he lawfully owned*.

The choice of a modern Dives who has wrecked lives as Voltaire ruined souls is at once invidious and difficult. There is a mournful *embarras de*

* Crabbe, “ The Borough,” Letter XIV.

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richesses in the selection from among those who have been as treacherous in their stewardship of material resources as was the Frenchman in his use of intellectual wealth. Perhaps, however, it is at once harmless and obvious to remark that the Church of the Middle Age, with its just and powerful Trade Guilds, would have made uncommonly short work of the game of "beggar-my-neighbour," as successfully played by the late Jay Gould. Yet the same Church would have defended to the last dollar that capitalist's just private ownership of all moneys acquired by his regrettably infrequent "square deals."

Let us proceed to a clearer indication of the Church's attitude towards Collectivism than these instances of (a) the just ownership, (b) the responsible stewardship of a ten-cent pen or ten million dollars of money, as the case may be. The Catholic Church, to which the whole world now looks as the final bulwark against Socialism, and its loathly, inevitable sequel of "free love," has taught throughout the ages that it is an excellent thing to hold all things in common. The early Christians did it. Our religious orders do it to this day—voluntarily. We approve of men giving up their rights; we object to the State taking them away. "Our quarrel with you Socialists is, not that you encourage State ownership, but that you destroy private ownership; not that you provide State employment, but that you destroy private employment."*

* "A Dialogue on Socialism," by the Rev. J. B. McLaughlin, O.S.B., Catholic Truth Society, 69, Southwark Bridge Road, London. I take advantage of this brief

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A Catholic essayist, however, as I have been compelled to point out earlier in this book, must ever bear in mind the unwritten law incumbent on all exponents of light literature. He must amuse while he endeavours to instruct; he must not get out of his depth, and—in the case of warfare on dry land—he must remember that his task as a guerilla-fighter is rather to pick off the enemy's stragglers than to plan or lead any frontal attack.

It must suffice, then, with such ammunition as I can command, to maim or slay some few of the straggling ideas most cherished in the Socialist camp, while the great guns of the Church boom hopefully on our enemies' main position. Yes, the position of our enemies, our public foes—*hostes*, if not as yet *inimici*. The writings and speeches of Socialist leaders in America and England, and still more in Germany and France, show lucidly that they are champions of those concerning whom St. Paul spoke twice, the second time "weeping," saying that they were "enemies of the Cross of Christ."

Take that Socialist teaching on the marriage law of Christendom, for instance, as a first shot from our short-range carbine. If a theoretical Socialist with a lawful wife and family bids me withhold my fire,

quotation from an admirable booklet issued by the parent Catholic Truth Society to call attention to that body's publications on the social problem. These may be procured by American readers at nominal cost, through any Catholic bookseller, from the International Catholic Truth Society, of Brooklyn, New York. They are doubtless familiar with the good work on the same lines already achieved nearer home by their own Truth Societies.

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claiming that his system is a purely economic one, the only possible reply is to request him, in the irreverent catchword of a dozen years ago, to "go away back and sit down." Anyone can throw rocks at the house of improper picture-cards the Socialists call the edifice of marriage without having gone through a course of economics. In the practice of some Socialist leaders and the theory of their underlings the "law" of marriage is even as the mining-camp language described by "Truthful James." It is "frequent, and painful, and free." "Marry early and marry often, by the aid of divorce, and send the children to be reared by the State." Such is the avowed ideal of Socialistic organs in their leading articles.

Now, this kind of thing will never do. Even the few dozen voluble eccentrics up and down Christendom who term themselves "Catholic Socialists" should realize this more quickly than most of us. For we presume them to have read Socialist books as well as learned their Catechism, if only from the name they affect, absurd as this is, as who should say the Dark-Brights or the Head-Tails. They are eager to assure us that they both know and practise their Catechism, which teaches the indissolubility of Christian marriage. Socialism teaches the precise reverse in every book and journal that its ægis protects or its purse finances. A gifted young friend of mine, who has read carefully from the standpoint of the Catholic student many of the recent books issued by the "comrades" in England, is honestly amazed at the perverseness with which (in his phrase) "the marriage question is lugged out"

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into publicity on every occasion, aired at most Socialist meetings, and enunciated in all the Red Flag journals.

"Surely," he has said to me, "it should be the first object of these new economic theorists to convince people, first, as to the stringent need of social amelioration ; secondly, as to the excellence of their doctrinairism concerning the means by which betterment is to be brought about—downright economical robbery, as the Church and you and I well know it to be. But why are they always dragging out 'free love' ? They should stow this away among the most remote arcana of their cult. It should be kept for the consumption of their initiates, their esoterics. As it is, they are mortally vulnerable to Christians on this point. It is not the danger-spot of Achilles on his heel. It is the deep wound of Goliath in his brow. I confess I *can't* understand the false tactics of these shrewd and careful men."

I think I can. The Devil has cared little for his dupes from the beginning. It suffices that his ends be gained. Let his instruments go to—well, his own eternal abode. In the Christian beginning he made his attack, through Arius, on the inconceivably lofty heights of the Adorable Trinity itself. Nowadays he is grubbing at the foundations of Church and State alike—the Christian family. On this the whole fair fabric of Christendom is reared. Almost visibly, even to the eyes of sense, the Prince of Darkness is advancing the two wings of his army against the hallowed estate of matrimony. The right wing of Satan's legions is compact of those

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regiments of the envious we term Socialists, while to his left he relies upon Spiritism in all its dark and nameless forms. Each of these is assailing marriage, and the duty of rearing children in the fear and love of God. Truly the devils have a slacker chain, as in the centuries of the first ten persecutions. And how wisely has the Supreme Pastor thrown boldly back to the Eucharistic discipline of those stormy ages, and bidden us brace for daily battle by daily Communion.

The Holy See's legislation on frequent and daily Communion, indeed, cuts away the ground from the main thesis of Socialism, as does almost any other clear exposition of Catholic faith. For Socialism holds that man is naturally good, and therefore naturally perfectible. Pelagius, the heretic of dim old days, could have played a very fraternal foursome on modern golf-links with Marx and Belfort Bax and that dull, Antichristian scribe, Mr. Blatchford, of the British *Clarion*. For Socialists hold, with what has not unfairly been termed pig-philosophy, that, were the full and common trough provided, the natural goodness of man would flower in adipose, tranquil beauty. It is well to get deep down to an opponent's vital principle, and it is by way of being cheering to the man with a short carbine when he can do it. The 4·7 field-piece will slay a whale to annihilation, but the hand-harpoon can often catch him.

Now this central argument—the very heart of all Socialism—is the error of the Protestantism from which it sprang. The great bulk of the Reformers denied grace by denying the means of grace—the

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Sacraments. Perhaps, without knowing it, the Protestantism of English-speaking countries has tacitly denied for three centuries the need of grace. The seemingly contrary doctrines of the "camp-meeting" and the "revival" may safely be disregarded, for, once the quasi-repentant explosion is over, new "church members" are taught the same soothing doctrine as their elders — viz., that man's will is inclined to good rather than to evil. After the hysteric stage of the mourner's bench, English Methodists are urged to conceive their good resolutions inviolable — indeed, indefectible. They are "saved."

The result of all this teaching from the most popular pulpits in non-Catholic England has been to provide a harvest into which the Socialist is now putting his sickle. But suppose the reverse is true? Suppose historians can establish that whole nations no less than individuals have exulted in the base refrain, "It's naughty, but it's nice"? Opponents of Socialism on the secular standpoint are convinced that this lesson of history is inexpugnable. We Catholics do not need it, for we know that man's natural inclinations are prone to evil from his very childhood, and (as one of our Catechisms has it) "if not corrected by self-denial, will certainly carry us to hell." I know a baby, two years old, who used to smite his mother in the eye, and might be doing so now but for the due administration of the mild maternal corrective. The trust of Socialists in the natural goodness and perfectibility of the fellow-mortals whom they will have to pay to govern and protect them on land and sea can only be

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described in further words from "Truthful James," as particularly "childlike and bland."

The sty-philosophy of the open trough has, indeed, blinded the Socialist to the facts of history. Give him a myriad troughs and as many sties, but suppose among his rulers he has chosen even one Mr. Armour? He will be surprised one fine morning, as his compeers are at Chicago, well cared for though they be till the eve of their swift demise. A war and a Napoleon must tread swift upon the heels of all revolutions that are wholly material. Wholesale rebellion is wholesale negation of that principle of authority without which a family, far less a State, cannot hold together a month by the almanac. There is confusion. Along comes the strong, self-confident man, and though he be practically a foreigner, like the amazing little Corsican, or an unknown country brewer with a wen on his nose, like Cromwell, the despot of Puritanism, he is welcomed by a headless community for quite a long time, during which hard-and-fast militarism replaces the callow theorizings that have induced it.

So far as England is concerned, it would seem as though Socialism resembled in its genesis and present position that movement among French *intellectuels* which was the prelude to the Revolution, as Taine so clearly indicates in his "Origines de la France Contemporaine." Before the tumbrils fed the guillotine with Catholic flesh and blood, or a dancing-girl could pirouette on the altar of Notre Dame, it was necessary that bookish and godless men should have worked hard for years to "educate" the public hellward. Talking of the vast lapse of

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religious faith and practice in his day, Voltaire said with glee to Frederick of Prussia: "Sire, all that you see is the work of books." Yes, the books came first, and then the tumbrils and the guillotine, and the drownings (*les noyades*) of Carrier and others. And all was done for the Rights of Man and the Three Words of black magic which the books had taught. What magic, indeed, there is in words—just words that go forth and never come back! When the Covenanters hanged a Cavalier's wife, they looped the rope "in the fear of the Lord." When the Sansculottes spat upon Marie Antoinette they spat "fraternally." "Sois mon frère, ou je te tue."

Now, the ruling of man depends on the indisputable command, whether it emanate from the policeman we pay or the tyrant our follies have deserved. In all books on Socialism that I have read, the voice of authority that keeps the equalized herd together has the sound of a gramophone wound up by the author, and ceasing abruptly at "Finis." Mr. Wells, for instance, in order to supply authority and its sanction in a Socialist community, just borrows machinery from Nietzsche, the maniac, and from the feudal history of Japan. As *dii ex machina*, he introduces "Overmen," whom he calls "Samurai," with sentimental reference to a certain alliance, that does his British patriotism much credit. Like the "Mr. Michael Murphy" of a well-known song, our Mr. Wells is a man of great ability. So was Lawrence Sterne, and it is precisely because the author of "Tristram Shandy" was brilliant as well as disingenuous that Thackeray

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called him a mountebank in his well-known American lecture.* What! Are we to throw away Christ and His Christendom for a universe of communized helots, with a handful of Spartans to whip them?

* * * * *

I had wished to speak some words on Socialism and the Christian believer, but in all candour patience fails me. Bluntly—brutally, if you will—the English Socialist is neither honest nor honourable in his attempts to proselytize the English Catholic or Christian believer. The suave purrings of Puritan-bred English “comrades,” their deft verbal confusions of *Social Reform* with *Socialism*, make one turn with less nausea to the logical blasphemy of the Vivianis and Jaurès abroad, or the writings of Blatchford and Bax at home. The two latter are at any rate consistently Antichristian. The second of them, whose authority as an exponent of Socialist opinion is undoubted, does not mince matters when criticizing the “Christian Socialists.” He says (“Ethics of Socialism”) : “Lastly, one word upon that singular hybrid, the Christian Socialist. . . . The association of Christianity with any form of Socialism is a mystery. . . . It is difficult to divine a motive for thus preserving a name [Christian Socialism], which confessedly in its ordinary meaning is not only alien, but hostile, to the doctrine of Socialism.”

To conclude this inadequate reference to the attitude of Socialism towards the believer, no class of the community makes merrier over the con-

* See “Sterne and Goldsmith” in “English Humorists of the Eighteenth Century.”

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tradictory titles of "Christian Socialism" than candid Socialists themselves. What must these gentry think of the "*Catholic*" Socialist? If they call him a wheelless bicycle, steering due north by south, Pope Pius will not say them nay.

* * * * *

There are "callous employers" whose whole life is given up to the "greed of unrestrained competition." It is for them to say if they will adopt gladly the Social Reform of Our Lord, and of Pope Leo's Letter on Labour. If they do, there will be no Socialistic revolution of blood, of tears, and of tyranny. In fact, there will be no Socialism left, and thus no pride of place or purse for Socialist agitators. Herr Bebel and his underlings in Germany quite understand this. They are opposed tooth and nail to the Catholic land reforms of the Catholic Centre Party in the German Reichstag, who have removed material discontent from thousands of families in the Fatherland by a simple enactment allotting them portions of the soil—to be their own, of course; not pooled in a tyrannous Commune or phalanstery.

This in Germany. In France the attitude of French Socialists towards, for example, Léon Harmel can only be described as one of frenetic rage. For the great ironmaster has so simply solved the social problem on his vast demesnes by throwing back to the old admixture of piety, profit-sharing, and kindly personal intercourse between master and man, that their avocation is gone, in strikeless realms where industrialism has been taught to

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conserve the note of chivalry. Now Léon Harmel, it is whispered, was in a sense a collaborator of Leo XIII. in the great Labour Encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, as Cardinal Manning indubitably was. The secret of this great man's success lies in Social Reform, not Socialism. It is summed in the word "religion." Should fire and sword sweep over France again, he will need no "Pinkerton's agents" to stand about him, pistol in hand, as employers did in the Pullman riots and at Pittsburg. He will stand unscathed amid a toil-worn family of happy thousands who look upon him as a father, for their interests and affections are his, while his are theirs. Would that a few, or even one, of the rich employers of labour in English-speaking lands might follow Harmel's example! Even on selfish grounds, the Penny Catechism is a more effective weapon than a posse of Pinkerton's men. It is cheaper in this world, and its use cannot be reprobated in the next.

The kingdom of God is *within* us. No external utopianizing can so much as put an emollient on the present social canker. The cure must come from within. The poor "body of the infected world" must drink deep again of religion. No dangerous economic or political stimulant (such as Collectivism) will do more than sting the working world into the galvanic semblance of abiding life, or for more than a peril-fraught year at the most. All must drink of God's saving founts, especially the selfish, idle, heartless, callous rich.

The play on words bringing capital and "capital" punishment into one sentence is indeliberate, but

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you know what the Frenchman said when asked if he thought well of the abolition of the capital penalty. "It is admirable," said he, "if the murderers show us the way."

* * * * *

A Socialistic dialogue by Mr. Lowes Dickinson, a convinced Collectivist, has been issued by his London publishers.* I cannot refrain from transcribing the following passages, which are hopeful, inasmuch as they show that one who still holds Collectivism to be the panacea of all the crimes and uglinesses of white man's civilization is nevertheless assured that we must rend our hearts, and not our garments ; that we must place our hope in God, and not in statesmanship, if we seek a permanent cure :

" This animal Man (he cries)—this poor thin wisp of sodden straw buffeted on the great ocean of fate ; this ignorant, feeble, quarrelsome, greedy, cowardly victim and spawn of the unnatural parent we call Nature ; this abortion, this clod, this indecent, unnamable thing, is also, as certainly, the child of a celestial father. Sown into the womb of Nature, he was sown a spiritual seed. And history, on one side the record of man's entanglement in matter, on the other is the epic of his self-deliverance."

In these sentences Mr. Lowes Dickinson seems to deny God's grace with Pelagius, and (inconsistently) much natural virtue in man with the pessimists and Calvin. However, you must not expect clear theology from any non-Catholic English literary

* " Justice and Liberty," Dent and Co., London, 1909.

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man. Let us follow our author to the end, as he gropes after God, "if perchance he may find Him":

"Poetry, philosophy, art, religion, what you will, are but its expression; they are not It. Thought is a key to unlock its prison; words are a vessel to carry its seed. But it is Reality of Realities, fact of facts, force of forces. . . . While all men are crying 'impossible,' it has sped and done. Even in those who deny it, it lies a latent spark; let them beware the conflagration when the wind of the spirit blows."

While there seem to be traces of pantheistic vital immanence (or "Modernism") in this eloquent passage, it may be looked upon sympathetically as being the product of a Socialist pen. Within the Church there must be the whole loaf or none. Outside, a modicum of fairly sound bread is useful so far as it goes. To change the metaphor (with Hibernian licence), if this able Socialist's nebulous view, side by side with that of Pope Leo, be but "as moonlight unto sunlight, and as water unto wine," it must not be forgotten that careful men may be led home by lunar rays, and that water is good for the exhausted when pure wine is not obtainable.

The urgent danger of the Socialistic movement is to be sought, not in the argumentative acuteness or even the diabolic zeal of our opponents, but in the sheer apathy of rich and of middle-class Catholics.

IX

CHILD-POETRY

"Darling, would that I could put
Chains on childhood's wingèd foot,
Hold you back and keep you still,
Always, always nine years old,
Where the slope of life's long hill
Glistens in the sunlight's gold!"

REV. J. W. ATKINSON, S.J.

THE notes of the true Church are four—unity, sanctity, Catholicity, apostolicity. But her good attributes are unnumbered, and one of them is a love of the humorous side of life. St. Louis of France bade a holy monk who dined with him to speak only of amusing things at dinner. The good man was apt to improve the occasion, and to spoil digestion, by dwelling on eternity while the soup grew cold. St. Francis of Sales commends wit at table. St. Philip Neri was not only a verbal humorist, but a practical joker. And the graver St. Alphonsus Liguori, in his mild but solid theology, is slow to consider sinful the broad jests of "vine-dressers, muleteers," and the like, holding that the minds of these rough, cleanly-living folk can fix upon the entirely legitimate joke and neglect the coarsest of settings. The standard of human good

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taste is one thing, for it varies through the ages. The law of God is another, being of its nature and origin immutable. I fear that the eighteenth-century roadside or vineyard witticisms of St. Alphonsus's *mulones atque vindemiatores* would be considered strong enough to stop a clock to-day, even if the clock were hanging in a cloister. Yet the cloister was the "comic paper" of the ages—the home of wit and of humour—long before a Catholic artificer devised the craft of printing.

The cloister, however, has its jokes to-day, as it will have them to-morrow, and is as gaily unsolicitous as yesterday whether the "unco guid"—the primly proper, the rigidly respectable—take Pharisæic scandal by its innocent quips or no. For instance, it says that Pope Leo XIII. of holy memory "invented" St. Joseph. The impudence of this remark is most useful, for it glues in the memory the great fact that it is to Leo XIII. we owe one of our greatest boons—the strengthening of devotion to the foster-father of Our Lord. Here in England, during the strong reign of Cardinal Manning, the cloister used to say that he had "invented" the Holy Ghost—a seemingly most irreverent, but really quite sincere, tribute to a holy man's labour in honour of the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity. St. Philip Neri never went to bed at night without saying one "Our Father" in honour of the Holy Spirit.

Just as echoes of the world resound within the Church, so surely are cloister chords bound to be copied *tant bien que mal* by the busy crowd without. I have thought again and again that the play on the verb "to invent," which was assuredly a

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monastic joke in its inception,* was copied by Voltaire in his undeservedly famous line : " Si Dieu n'existait pas, il faudrait l'inventer."† And certainly the stale but still current jest of French literary circles is based upon Voltaire's borrowing. " It is Victor Hugo," say these pundits, " who invented the child."

Certainly *le père Hugo*—as Adolphe Retté calls the great man who became so piteous a slave to vanity in his latest years—did good service to the dry and stilted French verse of his early and middle period when he began to write child-poetry. It is idle to labour the point that he had been preceded and excelled by the English Lake poets, by Shakespeare, by Dante, and by others too numerous to mention. Victor Hugo's fellow-countrymen are curiously ignorant of literary geography and history, on even the secular side of their maimed education. On the religious side, if " outside !" in the imperative be a side at all, they are taught nothing in the State *lycées*, so that to quote (for instance) the incomparable tenderness of Prudentius in the Hymn of the Holy Innocents would be worse than a waste of breath. It would merely evoke the hooligan yell, which seems to be the sole argument of their deputies when a Catholic claim is submitted in the Chamber.

* Perhaps from the Latin title of the Feast of the Finding of the Holy Cross—*Inventio Sanctæ Crucis*.

† The opening lines of Voltaire's " L'Existence de Dieu," in which this occurs, are nobler and more beautiful :

" Tout annonce d'un Dieu l'éternelle existence,
On ne peut le comprendre, on ne peut l'ignorer ;
La voix de l'univers annonce sa puissance,
Et la voix de nos cœurs dit qu'il faut l'adorer."

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Yet nothing poor Victor Hugo ever wrote (I am told that before going to render account of his colossal gifts he received the last Sacraments by the pious subterfuge of his servants), nothing he ever set forth on paper concerning children, can compare with the untranslatable second verse of "Salvete flores Martyrum":

"Vos prima Christi victima
Grex immolatorum tener,
Aram sub ipsam simplices
Palma et coronis luditis"

"Ye simple babes, beneath the very altar of the Lamb, ye play hoop with crown and palm-branch." If the humours of the cloister seem daring to the dour *voteen*, at least mothers will welcome their audacity of tenderness within the liturgy and outside it. One Jesuit priest-poet has written a hymn to St. Aloysius which pretty well calls that miraculous boy the *enfant gâté* (in the bewildering wealth of graces showered upon him) of God our Father. This sacerdotal singer is Irish. I confess to an unworthy feeling of racial regret that Prudentius and not Sedulius was the sweet liturgical bard who hymned the "Holy Innocents." For Sedulius's name at home in Ireland was Shiel. Yet I will gladly surrender to any critic who holds that Shiel-Sedulius, poet and Saint, could never have surpassed the figure of Prudentius, when he likens the fury of Herod to a whirlwind that swept away the rosebuds of the garden of Rachel:

"Christi insectator sustulit
Cen turbo nascentes rosas."

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The wayward Irishman who wrote as "Father Prout" roamed far astray when he spoke slightly of the literary merit of our Latin hymns. Like too many of his period, he was hypnotized by the exquisite plagiarisms of Horace. Mæcenas's fat little thrush was his norm—his Koran. A greater Irishman, Richard Chevenix Trench, held nobler views of Latin hymnology in his book by that name, and so (conversationally) did Tennyson. Of later years Professor Saintsbury has pointed out what all Catholics who have been present at Requiem Masses must often have realized—namely, that the Blessed Giacomone, in the "Dies Iræ," has achieved the most tremendous trochaic line ever penned in any language. It is the verse that describes the Last Trumpet: "Tuba mirum spargens sonum."

Here the thud of the trochee falls on a different vowel-sound in every instance. The mere vocal effect is terrific, when sung to the Gregorian. Yet it is achieved without art, or at any rate without self-conscious artifice. "Father Prout" (Rev. F. Mahony) should have rested content with the mellow chiming of his "Bells of Shandon," and left carpings against the Breviary hymns to people like Professor Jowett, whom Tennyson once gloriously floored at table for a literary heresy only pardonable in a don and a Protestant.

I have not access at present to Hallam's "History of Literature," but any reader who has can turn up (somewhere within the first fifty pages) a tender child-poem in Latin, written (or sung) by a slave-mother to her babe. Hallam introduces it chiefly as an argument that *rhyme* was loved by the Roman

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ear in Imperial days. But I can promise any book-loving readers much pleasure if they will hunt up this clue at leisure. It will also show them that what is good in the "cult of the child" is no more modern than the modern desire to eat bread. I have not the book by me, so we must e'en leap through the centuries till we come to the fifteenth. There we may make brief halt at the name of the lady who is best known in French literary annals as Clotilde de Surville. Her real name was far more sonorous. She was baptized, in 1405, Marguerite Eléonore Clotilde de Vallon Chalys, and, I am glad to say, she lived full ninety years, so that she survived the discovery of that America in which her full name, if hitherto unknown, should be a boon to the compiler of historical novels. As her name very nearly implies, she was born at the Château de Vallon, which is in the Bas-Vivarais. French historians consider that in the grace and naïveté of her poems she surpassed all the men of her troublous age. Yet each line that has survived of her work, thus highly praised, reads like the outpourings of

"A humbler poet,
Whose songs gushed from his heart,
As showers from the clouds of summer,
Or tears from the eyelids start."

Have you not often thought that Longfellow—the unduly praised in life, the unjustly depreciated after death—unconsciously painted himself in those familiar lines? But listen to the artless, unformed French of Clotilde de Surville, a good Christian wife and mother, in the child-poem she sweetly calls "Verselets à Mon Premier-Né." It is a poem as

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long as it is beautiful, for mothers who have the gift of poesy cannot but multiply "little verses" to a man-child who is also their first-born. Three only of the "verselets," however, may serve our turn :

- " O cher enfantelet, vray pourtraiet de ton père,
Dors sur le seyn que ta bouche a pressé !
Dors, petiot ; cloz, amy, sur le seyn de ta mère,
Tien doulx œillet par le somme oppressé !
- " Estend ses brasselets ; s'espand sur lui le somme ;
Se clost son œil, plus ne bouge . . . il s'endort . . .
N'estoit ce tayn fleuri des couleurs de la pomme,
Ne le diriez vous dans les bras de la mort ? . . .
- " Arreste, cher enfant ! . . . j'en fremy toute engtière ! . . .
Reveille-toy ! chasse ung fatal propoz !
Mon fils ! . . . pour ung moment . . . ah ! revoy la
lumière .
Au prix du tien rends-moy tout mon repoz ! . . . "

The babe awakes, and the poet-mother continues :
" Douce erreur ! il dormoit . . . c'est assez, je respire."
How the artless old French seems to clutch at the heart, like the naïve diction of the wonderful Bishop Camus, who wrote two *thousand* books, not one of which has survived, save his immortal Boswellizing of the daily conversation of St. Francis of Sales !*

But the "cult of the child," so far as it is good (a heavy reservation), is no more modern than Our Blessed Lord's "Come unto me." What is new in it is not true, and all it has of true is far from new. Its novelties at present run to pampering or neglect at home, and to "applied psychology" at school. Being a schoolmaster of the older school, I don't quite know what the latter means ; but if a tree may

* The "Esprit Intérieur de Saint François de Sales." There is no full English translation.

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be judged by its fruits it is a very bad herb, seeing that since the "discovery of the child" and of childology, the bulk of candidates for the army in both England and America can neither spell correctly nor tell an acid from an alkali.*

Away with the childologists! Let us get to the true tradition of the Church's tenderness for her baptized babes. These little ones are to the Spouse of Christ a garden of fragrant flowers, where the angels perpetually hover.† And amid these angels are to be found Catholic mothers and Catholic priests. When such mothers and such priests have been accorded the gift of song, we must expect that they will write high poetry in honour of the Church's new-born.

Perhaps all Christian mothers are poets, if we may accept the definition as set forth in some striking lines well worthy the labour of transference to this page:

"The truest poet is not one
Whose golden fancies fuse and run
To moulded phrases, crusted o'er
With flashing gems of metaphor;
Whose art, responsive to his will,
Makes voluble the thoughts that fill
The cultured windings of his brain,
Yet takes no sounding of the pain,

* See the piteous reports of American and British army examiners in the educational journals, *passim*.

† "At pusilli sunt ei flores
Suaveolentes, queis cultores
Deus dat angelicos"

(Cardinal Wiseman's hymn in honour of St. Edmund of Canterbury).

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The joy, the yearnings of the heart,
Untrammelled by the bonds of art.
Oh ! poet truer far than he,
Is such alone as you may be,
When in the quiet night you keep
Mute vigil on the marge of sleep."*

The writer, himself a true poet, is content (you will perceive) with half what Horace claimed. He thinks that the spiritual mind (the Roman's *mens diviniior*) really makes the poet, and that 'great language (*os magna sonaturum*) is but an external, an adjunct, an accessory. The view is highly debatable, but there is no question of its beauty, which lies foursquare with the "mute, inglorious Milton" of Gray's "Elegy."

Yet there have been mothers and priests in the Church who have not only lived and loved and thought, but have written sweet child-poems, since the days of Clotilde de Surville and of Prudentius. I am not expected to be unduly erudite in these homely pages, so I need instance but two names of the living, those of Katharine Tynan and Father Hugh Blunt.

Yet I wonder how many lovers of child-poetry (other than children themselves) have followed the exquisite song-cycles that have appeared irregularly in certain of our best Catholic magazines during the

* Mr. T. A. Daly in the *Irish Monthly*. Father Herbert Lucas, S.J., has something to the same effect in his strong poem, "Two Ways":

'Must all men, then, be poets, high-cultured, artistic,
If the voice of the Lord they would bear in their hearts ?
Ah no ! To the simple, not less than the mystic,
He speaks, and is heard, and high wisdom imparts."

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past few years under the modest initials " J. W. A.," which too completely veil the winning personality of Father Atkinson, S.J. ? I shall not wait to speculate about the matter, for I am a little disposed to be angry at the silence of our reviewers on this matter.

When Gilbert Cloquet, the hero of Bazin's great novel, "*Le Blé Qui Lève*," grasps the Curé's hand as a pledge of his conversion, the author seizes the symbolism of the act and makes Cloquet say : " That is where the hand of the working man should ever be—in the hand of the priest." In the same sense of Christian allegory, it is where the hand of the child should ever be. In that Catholic Flanders whence Bazin drew the noblest scenes of his uneven yet unequalled book, it is beautiful to see how literally this is realized by the children themselves. If a priest meets some of his parishioners out walking, and stands to chat with them awhile, the two youngest children present in the group go to right and left of him and take his hands, as of right. The good man holds their tiny palms in his with an automatism almost more beautiful than any outward show of priestly affection. I have seen this again and again in the Low Countries, and never without trust that the custom and its cause may endure for all time. Here in England, especially among our poor school-children on the east side of London, the instinct of the little ones guides them aright when a priest comes into the playground, but there is some scrambling, pushing, and emulation. Tradition has not confirmed the orderly Flemish decree that the favoured ones should be always the youngest lambs of the flock.

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"La main de l'enfant dans la main du prêtre."
To my mind this high text is evolved by "J. W. A." in the following poem, with a captivating sincerity of tenderness no living priest-poet has surpassed :

"A CHILD.

- "Down the stairs, one step at a time,
Stopping to toss from her forehead a curl,
Softly singing a baby rhyme,
Comes to meet me a baby girl.
- "Dorothy dear, with her golden hair
And her hazel eyes and her cheeks milk-white,
Smiling because I am waiting there,
And for joy of her own and of my delight.
- "Into my arms with a laugh she skips,
And locks me up in a fast embrace ;
She kisses my mouth with her soft warm lips,
Then leans on my shoulder her flower-like face.
- "We sit in my chair, and she rocks and swings,
And tells me tales of her fairyland,
And she needn't repeat 'the most hardest fings,'
For I'm not like nurse, and I understand.
- "I pay her with stories of knights of old,
And wonderful giants and tiny elves,
And the martyrs of Christ, so brave and bold—
'Women and men, you know, like ourselves.'
- "Out through the window the mist hangs low,
And night draws on and the world is drear,
But flowers of summer are all a-blow,
And June at its brightest and best is here.
- "Earth looks lonely and sad to see,
Gusts of autumn are loud and wild,
But Dorrie and I are as glad as can be—
Such is the love of a little child."

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Compare with these certain well-known lines by the rhetorical "inventor of the child" :

" Quelquefois nous parlons, en remuant la flamme,
De patrie et de Dieu, des poètes de l'âme
 Qui s'élève en priant :
L'enfant paraît ; adieu le ciel et la patrie,
Et les poètes saints ; la grave causerie
 S'arrête en souriant."

For all Hugo's grandiose strumming on a lute like a warming-pan, don't you find the song is *limp* ? This is due in part no doubt to the metallic defects of what Byron called

" His country's creaking lyre,
That whetstone of the teeth, monotony in wire."

French for prose, English for poetry. But Hugo did more than any man, save poor Verlaine, to get the *pang-pang* of the banjo out of his poems. We must look more closely. Is not the limpness of the verse quoted to be sought in the mournful fact that Hugo's tremendous imagination had drifted from Catholic moorings ? The following, " To K. in Heaven," will show better what I mean, though Father Atkinson's tiny threnody is as simple as it is heartfelt :

" TO K. IN HEAVEN.

" Dear girl, the earth was all too poor a place,
 Though fair it seem in sunny hours like these,
To hold thee long apart from His embrace,
 Whose favour blest thee with such power to please ;
And yet, and yet, for us one little nook,
When thou wert there, put on a heavenly look,
And surely angels watched thy ways and smiled,
 Won by the goodness beaming from a child."

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In these lines, I think, we have the justification of child-poems written by priests. They bring comfort and strength to the Christian mother, whether happy or bereaved.

Are we not a little overwhelmed by French adaptations, and even verbatim renderings, in our useful Catholic light literature? There seems to be no room in the French devotional mind for the healthy child whom our nurses call "a handful." It too often takes a priest rather than a traditionally-minded lay Catholic editor to realize that a child may be most pleasing to God without being very *sage*, or (hateful words!) *bien sérieux*. "J. W. A." speaks out his mind refreshingly on the subject of the "tiresome child":

"TO AN IMP.

"You're not an angel, not a Saint,
And yet you're dear as you are quaint;
So full of mischief, such a tease,
So rompish when you climb my knees;
So fond of play, so loath to work,
What Nanna calls 'a little Turk';
And yet so quick to sympathize
By loving words and tender eyes,
So gentle with the weak and poor,
So strong in patience to endure,
So glad to help at mother's call,
And such a darling after all."

If ever a poet could be forgiven for squeezing a little sermon into every song, it is the priest-poet, especially one who sings for little children, because children have in its fullness the "naturally Christian soul" of which Tertullian speaks, and can swallow

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and digest any amount of sound Catholic doctrine in tender years, if it be ever so lightly dusted over with the powdered sugar of God-given, earthly affection.

Yet "J. W. A." knows when to refrain, and can sing joyous little human strains of tenderness, like the following, without an ounce of preaching in them :

"To D. K.

"Listen to the throstle singing,
Singing in the rain ;
Singing as if June were bringing
Summer back again.
Trees are leafless, earth is dreary,
Hope itself looks vain ;
Still he sits aloft, unwearied,
Singing in the rain.

"Dorothy, be like the throstle—
Keep a mirthful heart ;
Always come as joy's apostle
Unto souls that smart.
Banish every thought of sadness :
Choose the wiser part,
Singing merry songs of gladness,
Singing in your heart."

No, it is not priests who spring into the pulpit out of season. It is for the unchartered lay preacher to do *that*. Listen to the solemn bow-wow of Victor Hugo when he is minded to throw a sermon at a child:

"Ma fille, va prier ! D'abord, surtout pour celle,
Qui berça tant de nuits ta couche qui chancelle,
Pour celle qui te prit jeune âme dans le ciel,
Et qui te mit au monde, et depuis, tendre mère,
Faisant pour toi deux parts, dans cette vie amère,
Toujours a bu l'absinthe, et t'a laissé le miel !"

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One has hardly heart to point out that "*toujours a bu l'absinthe*" is nothing less than comic. *Le père* Hugo, big writer as he was, often had these lapses, because he was as humourless as the pagan "worshippers of the child" around us to-day, who claim him as the "inventor" of their cult. Let him depart in peace from these pages, for he was a very great man, if a heretic in the tradition of true child-poetry.

Very small as Father Atkinson's output of child-verse has been (so far as publishers are concerned), I had wished to quote more of it in isolated stanzas from various poems. Let me close, however, with his poem "*To M. L.*," which ends with the haunting refrain I have set at the beginning of this paper :

" To M. L.

" I've a darling little Chum,
Sweet as any sugar-plum ;
Ever kind and true is she,
Day by day and hour by hour,
And her loving loyalty
Blossoms in a perfect flower—
Perfect flower is she herself,
Joyous, winsome little elf !

" If she smiles, the world is gay,
Like an olden roundelay ;
If she frowned—well, no one knows
What would happen if she should.
Not a wind that ever blows
Brings her anything but good,
And a frown would ill become
Such a child as happy Chum.

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“ When she nestles on my knee,
Any king might envy me ;
While she snuggles in my arms
I forget the stings of Time ;
Fears and doubts and cold alarms
Melt away to hope sublime,
And the world from east to west
Looks an Eden manifest.

“ Darling, would that I could put
Chains on childhood’s wingèd foot,
Hold you back and keep you still
Always, always nine years old,
Where the slope of life’s long hill
Glistens in the sunlight’s gold ;
Keep you till God’s angels come,
Just my little faithful Chum !”

“ La main de l’enfant dans la main du prêtre ”—
the child’s hand in that of the priest, who is *alter Christus*. Can you not hear the pulsing of this refrain in every song “ J. W. A.” has sung ? I think you can, and that you welcome it with me. We cannot get to heaven unless we become as little children, and the little children of to-day are the hope of the Church to-morrow. God bless all poets—and especially all priests—who use their divine art to bridge the years between adult sinners and the baby saints around us !

X

MAN-MADE CREEDS*

"He hath made of one all mankind to dwell upon the whole face of the earth . . . that they should seek God, if haply they may feel after Him or find Him."—
Acts xvii. 26, 27.

My first experience of the wishy-washy, and thus popular, attack upon Christ and His Church derived from man-made creeds, and their superficial resemblances to the truths of revelation, gave me a contempt for the hostile use of the lawful study of religions that age has not staled nor custom diminished.

I was a boy, and was travelling by railway with a friend, a Catholic army chaplain. We found ourselves in the casual company of an extremely drunken trooper. He plunged into his argument with no further introduction than a hiccough. "I've served in India," said he, "and I've seen the good work of you Catholic priests and of my Catholic comrades out there. If I hadn't been brought up in the Church of England, I dare say I'd be a Catholic. As it is, I'm no religion. If I were—if I were——"

* "Lectures on the History of Religions." Catholic Truth Society, London, and Brooklyn, New York.

MAN-MADE CREEDS

He fixed us with the portentous gravity of gaze that only one fluid on earth can induce—British beer.

"If I were any religion," he said, "I'd be a Mohammedan."

Then he added triumphantly: "'Cos why? How does your Christian Bible begin?"

And he repeated, not without a certain inebriate reverence, what may be called the magnificently matter-of-fact words of Gen. i. 1: "In the beginning God created Heaven and earth."

"There's a beginning for an inspired book," he added. "Now listen to this. Here's inspiration, if you like." And our friend of the cherry-tinted overalls began to declaim the highfalutin' rhodomontade which opens that glittering fake, the Koran. As he was yet speaking, he subsided into his corner and fell fast asleep, overcome by more powerful sherbets than those allowed by the Prophet to true believers.

This was an ignorant man, you will say, and you will say aright. But it is astonishing how many better-schooled people who have been to the East (and many thousands more who have never reached nearer the Orient than the East Side of New York or the East End of London) claim fluently that Catholics should abandon a historically founded creed because there are man-made religions, devoid of bases as big as a postage-stamp, which comprise in their teachings some elements of natural nobility. The argument is deliriously, maniacally bad. Because man-made creeds, which in history are demonstrably baseless, contain fragments of the truths held

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by Christians, *ergo* a divinely inspired and historically proven revelation is false! A sceptic shows you some ivories he has picked up in China. Some are frankly indecent, all of them grotesque: one of them represents the hazy story that Buddha's birth was foretold by a weird beast carrying a scroll in its mouth. The specimen I myself saw was meant by the Chinese artificer to resemble a deer, but it looked for all the world like a newsboy's yellow dog carrying a contents-bill. "The story is the same as that of the Annunciation," says your friend, with self-conscious airiness. In a moment or two (during which a silent "Hail Mary" may save you from gasping, and still more from hurting the idol or its owner) he will swallow his whole argument that Christianity and Buddhism are similar twigs of the same rootless tree. In my own case the Neo-Buddhist said to me, after showing off his jabberwock, "You see, people are so ignorant. They think that Buddhism and Christianity are identical because of superficial resemblances."

"Arising in great measure," said I, "from the age-old prophecies of the Messiah which we Catholics believe to be primitive revelation."

"Quite so," he acquiesced, "or from more recent Buddhistic imitations of the Romish—the—er—the Roman Catholic Church. But the essentials of the two religions are poles asunder. The Buddhist says: 'God, so far as He is a personal power at all, is a bad God, so let us human beings love one another.' A sort of mundane mutual assurance arrangement, do you take me? Now the Christian says: 'God is infinitely good, so we must love Him

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above all things, and our neighbour for His sake.' Let me show you this Japanese screen."

These very words were spoken to me by a leading English man of letters within five breaths of the flummery about the Buddha-beast. Either way, you see, there was a rock to throw at Our Blessed Lord. If the first one missed fire (the Frenchified sneer at Our Lady), then have at your Catholic visitor with a bit of real Buddhism, denying the ineffable goodness of the All-Holy God.

Superficial and seeming similarities are the last things in the world to establish true likeness, still less identity. The lazy man in the American parable whittled shoe-pegs at both ends, and had little difficulty in selling the produce of his idle hours to a short-sighted farmer as a bushel of oats. But no crop was raised from that seed, no porridge was boiled from its fertility. Doubtless it looked well. Perhaps the bushelful looked more like oats than do oats themselves, as Ruskin said that one of Turner's pictures looked more like a coal-boat than did a sure-enough collier steaming down the river. Resemblance is one thing. In the case of religions, as of oats, identic superhuman vitality is another.

Dr. Sanday, in his presidential address to the Oxford Congress of 1908, made a shrewd hit at the agile imaginations of scholars who are responsible for constructions built on the "principles" made classic by Fluellen: "There is a river in Macedon, and there is also, moreover, a river in Monmouth. . . . 'Tis so like as my fingers is to my fingers, and there is salmons in both." In the strange, clever book

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entitled "Orthodoxy," which seems to show that Mr. Gilbert K. Chesterton is nearing the vestibule of the Catholic Church, the wayward humorist has his fling at the cheap and popular "comparative" argument on which Mr. Sanday dropped a little solvent Shakespearean sarcasm. He takes an "argument" of some comparative religionist to the effect that both Buddhism and Christianity make something in their ceremonies of washings of the feet. On this he comments, with frivolity worthy of his opponent, that it is equally striking that both Buddhists and Christians should possess feet to wash.

Père de Grandmaison, in his C.T.S. brochure entitled "The Study of Religions," which strikes the chord, as it were, of the specialist studies carried out by his brilliant band of collaborators, is almost too mercifully disposed not to condemn as merely contemptible "the hasty generalizations of a youthful science, excited by its own delightful prospects of discovery." "Its own progress," he adds, "will correct, and has already corrected, many of its own faults. The Canadian Professor (not a Catholic), Dr. Jordan, reminds us that the very science which was 'airily summoned' to witness to the fundamental similarity between Buddhism and Roman Catholicism proved the 'most remorseless critic' of this theory. Renan's inquiries led him to say that the Semitic deserts were 'monotheist'; further research shows they were no such thing, and leaves Israel in solitary possession of the pure worship of One God. Still, in a matter where the fundamental problems of the soul's life and death are involved, we

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may justifiably protest, and bitterly, against the reckless formation of destructive theories and revolutionary hypotheses."

Exactly, especially as the "revolutionary hypotheses" thus "recklessly formed" are nowhere so confidently aired as by people who know nothing whatever about the very first beginnings of the study of religions—people who perorate on the cars, in the clubs, and at the tea-parties of "intense" non-Catholic women. The books such people "study," as a rule through the nebulous medium of magazines and the Sunday press, are too often written either by sectarians with axes to grind, or by rationalists "of moderate temper and in perfectly good faith,"* who inevitably set out, group, and interpret *on rationalistic lines* the religious facts described in their works. It is needless to remind Catholics that the view-point of rationalists (however "moderate" their temper or "perfect" their good faith) is a hopelessly wrong one, depending, as it does, on the blunt and dogmatic denial of miracle. Purbblind intellectuals, do they never have misgivings, in the still watches of the night, that a cloud of witnesses may arise on some day of compt to stultify their bookish negations, from the daughter of Jairus to the last one healed on earth at Lourdes?

Renan, the Breton, was by race a half-Irishman, and thus disposed to be true at times to momentary illumination rather than to the persistent upholstery of anti-Christian themes.

Now this man has written in so many words that if there be such a thing as miracle, all he or his

* Père de Grandmaison, "Study of Religions," p. 24.

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compeers have written is " nothing but a tissue of absurdities."

Miracle, you see, and what it signalizes. God's Fatherhood and Providence are rubbed off the rationalist slate as a matter of first principles. The conclusions of the now shaky theories of neo-Darwinism are scrawled in their place, and thus the mind of the " rationalistic " student of religions is naturally and necessarily inclined to judge of facts in a certain way, and to view them at a particular angle. For example, all facts which may seem to contradict the law of evolution will be minimized, explained away, and, when necessary, suppressed. Similarly, even in the case of a rationalist author in good faith and of first-rate erudition, it becomes the author's duty to hunt for an explanation of the religion of the Old and New Testaments which shall be immanent and purely natural—words regrettably familiar in certain suppressed or modified periodicals till the tenth Pius put his heel down hard on Modernism.

The very physical science in which these students of " man-made creeds " believe, should teach them, while building up the rule, to recognize the inevitable exception. It is a law that there should be an exception to every law. Now, the dear Christ Who made and saved us all—He, the *unicus*, is unique. His Church, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, may have sanctioned and adopted and sanctified from time to time certain pious human rites out of the wiser man-made creeds, but what exalts Christianity to the stars, a myriad leagues above the grovelling guesses of the syndicate

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theorists, is—Christ, Who can be found in one religion alone.

Thus, all Catholics who so desire may freely approach the study of religions—freely, because without hampering preconceptions. Convinced of the existence of one God, both Father and Providence of the human race, knowing as positive fact that God can enter into direct relation with His rational creatures, Catholics never dismiss as necessarily absurd every statement adduced by religions dividing humanity between them. To quote Père de Grandmaison : “ They know, by an historical tradition of which the foundations are assured, that God has really and truly intervened ; that, having spoken of old in the Prophets, He has finally spoken in His Son.* As guarantee of this fact they have the fulfilment of prophecies, the record of miracles, the superhuman holiness of the Son of God, and the permanent witness given to the world by the Holy Ghost : the Catholic Church herself, one, holy, indefectible, fruitful of infinite benefits, capable of inaugurating and carrying to perfection, within and through herself, the reformation and the moral and religious restoration of humanity.”

Père de Grandmaison's conclusion is compact of manly eloquence and of plain horse-sense, so that it may well be given before we go on to some glances at the fine work of his aides-de-camp, that may induce us to buy and to store their ammunition. Of old, Irish apple-women and (on the testimony of Newman himself) little school-boys who knew their Catholic Catechism could overthrow skilled

* Epistle to the Hebrews i. 1.

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misbelievers by knowledge of a sound penny manual. What may we not confidently expect when thoughtful Catholic readers can throw the detonant researches of specialists at the opponent who has no shot in his locker but the nebulosities of the last magazine, or the pretty work of Mr. Frazer in his sugary book, "The Golden Bough"?

"Outside the faith," says Père de Grandmaison, "the Catholic knows that there are men who 'grope after' in the dark what he holds to firmly in the relative light of faith; man adoring as 'unknown'* the God whose glad tidings have been announced to him, and Whom he recognizes when he cries, 'Our Father, Who art in Heaven.'

"He knows, again, that the relics of the primitive truths still subsist among these peoples, and are transmitted, mingled with innumerable and appalling superstitions, from generation to generation.

"He knows that these people have souls no less than Christians have, and experience desires and religious aspirations built on the same plan, destined to the same end. He cannot marvel, in consequence, when he sees that these desires and these aspirations translate themselves into institutions and sentiments and rituals analogous to his own. What he seeks, and assuredly finds, in Christian dogma, rite, Sacrament, those others seek it too, though they cannot fully find it, and reach out and strain after something, at least, to supply for that great mercy which they have not received—

"Or, rather, *which they have not received in all its fullness.*

* Acts xvii. 22 et seq.

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“ For, in the last place, the Catholic is aware that, just as there is no salvation for one who ‘ sins against the light,’ and voluntarily separates himself from the Catholic Unity which he has once realized to be Divine, even so—

“ ‘ Those who, labouring under an invincible ignorance with regard to our holy religion, faithfully follow the precepts of the natural law graven by God on the hearts of all, and, ready to obey God, lead a good and upright life, can, by virtue of the Divine light and of grace [of which they are ignorant], acquire eternal life. For God, Who sees, examines, and penetrates to the bottom of the spirit, the soul, the thoughts, and the habits of every man—God, infinitely good and merciful, by no means suffers that any should be punished by eternal penalties if he have not to answer for a voluntary fault.’* ”

“ Strong in their principles, and careful to sift the good grain of fact from the chaff of interpretation and polemical exposition, proud to belong to a Church, as to a religion, which ‘ wants nothing but the truth,’ Catholics can approach fearlessly, and especially in books which have not suffered from the influence of the rationalist principles described above, the *Study of Religions*. ”

✠ As a matter of hard fact, if “ comparative religionists ” of the cars and saloons did not make such a song about it, as an excuse for getting rid of their conscience and such scraps of revelation as reached them in bygone days of Sunday-school, even the most casual products of the serious study of religions

* Encyclical of Pius IX., *Quanto Conficiamur*, August 10, 1863.

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would make them think better of the one creed they always deride. I do not for a moment suggest that even one of my readers frequents saloons. But I know that most of them are almost daily brought into contact with the saloon mentality, which denounces, for example, Catholic Masses for the dead, and in the same breath adduces much remembered rhetoric from the latest magazine concerning the beauties of the religion of ancient Egypt. So be it. We turn to our intensely concentrated pamphlet in the C.T.S. series, "The Religion of Egypt," by Rev. A. Mallon. On the twenty-third page of this we read as follows, with a footnote referring us to an authoritative French work by Emmanuel de Rougé :

"For trivial or venial transgressions a sort of purification by fire was, at one epoch at any rate, devised ; and after it the deceased was admitted to the company of the blessed. This is the lesson clearly taught by some copies of the Book of the Dead preserved in the Louvre. The scene which represents the weighing of the soul is followed by the vignette of the pool of fire, guarded by four dog-headed apes ; these were the genii charged with effacing the stain of such offences as might have escaped the attention of the righteous soul, and thus to complete its purification."

With the exception of the deepest and most fundamental mysteries, like that of the Blessed Trinity, there are abundant "arguments from reason" to support all Catholic dogmas. You may find them in theological works. So I think it an aid and a consolation in our faith that the Egyptians thought

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rightly on the condition of the departed before the fullness of time had come. Their common-sense taught them that the soul might be specked with grey, and that not all souls are either murk-black or snow-white when coming before the Judge. But the "comparative religionist" of saloon mentality worries little on week-days about the tenets of the Church he is believed to belong to. I would not be surprised if he told you that St. Paul robbed his trumpet-tongued teaching of Purgatory from some shaven priest of Osiris. Incredible as it may seem, the whole attack which the more vulgar base upon "comparative religion" is a charge of theft. Buddhists eat buns at one time or other of the year; Catholics and some other Christians are apt to eat them (digestion permitting) on Good Friday. *Therefore* Christianity has bagged both buns and the whole body of its doctrine from Buddha. "I speak as one unwise." Yet those who listen might do worse than remember these words when speaking with one unwiser. In any case they could not do better than procure and study the series to which we must now revert.

Outside of scholastic circles, the religion of ancient Greece is less prattled about than a score of years ago, when half of the dominies and all University dons much given to the use of the pen were wont to air their Hellenism in the reviews. Had Byron lived, his caustic insight would have scoured all Hellenistic sentiment from his brain. We have indications of this in his later letters. Perhaps what effectively slew Hellenic religiosity in the British press was the failure of the Greeks in the

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Greco-Turkish war of the nineties, engineered by a group of bookish Londoners, who found a pulpit in the London *Daily Chronicle*. The descendants of the high-souled Achilles, and of other heroes known to fame and to Lemprière's "Classical Dictionary," just ran away from Edhem Pasha and his ragged regiments, trampling their wives and children in a mad quest of safety. From Byron to these bookmen, sentimental admirers of "the glory that was Greece," have forgotten the fusion of ideas and of races in which Greece ended. This Hellenistic jumbling is technically known as *syncretism*, which your dictionary will tell you means "the attempted reconciliation of irreconcilable principles." Now you cannot build a house, much less a citadel, upon such olla-podrida—a noisome mess, indeed, to poison soul and body with evil savours. "By their fruits"—that is, by the results of their final natural development—"shall you know them." When the Greek mythology, beloved of Shelley and of Keats, matured, what do we find? Just what we might expect from a man-made creed, kept in cask too long, and casually blended.

"There was a loss of definiteness in the features of the gods, a fusion of outlines, a capricious interchange of attributes from one god to another. Inscriptions testify to the frequent assimilation of Isis to Demêter, Aphrodité, Athené, Nemesis—of Osiris to Dionysos and Adonis—of Serapis to Asklepios, Zeus, Dionysos—of the Thracian goddess Bendis to Artemis, Hecaté, Persephoné. By slow degrees the idea was evolved that all these names responded to a single Divine force, mysterious and

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undefined. These fluctuations of thoughts are reflected in language by the use of such vague, indefinite phrases as 'the Divine,' 'the Divinity.' The abstract cult of Fortune developed in a remarkable way, as though the revolutions following on the Macedonian conquest had stirred up in man a more lively sense of his dependence on Destiny, a fatalist tendency emphasized by the steady invasion of Chaldean astrology. Although stimulating to religious curiosity, this syncretism became one of the chief obstacles to the spread of Christianity. Nothing could be more opposed to ideas then current than the doctrinal exclusiveness of the Christian religion, its moral intransigence, and its horror of any compromise with pagan cults. The Christian had to live in the world—nay, in the family circle—as one not belonging to it, and, in obedience to the hard saying of the Master, 'to lose his life in order to save it.' ”*

Christianity's—or, if you will, Catholicity's—"horror of any compromise." There is the fulcrum on which St. Paul laid his lever. There is the fulcrum on which we rely to-day. Mercifully, many of us have at least a piece of it always lying handy. If not—but these pages are not sermons.

In his "Religion of Ancient Syria" (p. 20), the Rev. G. S. Hitchcock cites aptly (with comment) some words from the London *Spectator* of October 7, 1906, which in a sense close down the "comparative religion" objector of magazine mentality with a slam :

* "The Religion of Ancient Greece," by the Rev. J. Huby, p. 29.

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“ ‘ That the symbolism and language of Christianity often present striking resemblances to those of other faiths is certain, and perhaps necessary, since all human beings live in the same world, and see with the same eyes, and experience for the most part the same sensations.’ And if it be further asserted that pagan and Christian art represent the ‘ Mother of the gods ’ and Our Blessed Lady in similar form, it is easily replied that ‘ the fact proves nothing except that the idea of motherhood suggests everywhere the same images.’ The explanation is indeed simple and sufficient ; and it is a superficial mind that does not attempt to penetrate the common language of images and metaphors to the inner meaning, so different in different religions.”

Some comparisons of the “ superficial mind ” reflect nothing but discredit on their authors. Professor Gurlitt compares the incident of Mithra dragging after him the dead (or doomed) bull—a very ancient astrological device, as the Rev. C. Martindale, S.J., is careful to point out in his brilliant lecture on Mithraism—to the Way of the Cross ! Mr. Mallock finds a parallel to our hosts in the *cross-stamped* loaves of Mithraic banquet, knowing quite well that most large round loaves in antiquity were so notched (like the buttered scones of his own Scottish tea-table) for convenient division into quarters. This kind of thing is mildly labelled “ discreditable ” by Mr. Martindale. I can give a baser instance of such “ *ipse dixit* theorizings ” from a book in my possession which Mr. Martindale has rightly deemed worthless of his steel. I refer to “ Chambers’s Encyclopædia,” which supplies half its

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theology to the British press. In the article "Mithras" (ed. 1886) the writer observes: "The most important of his [*i.e.*, Mithra's] many festivals was his birthday, celebrated on December 25, the day subsequently fixed—*against all evidence*—as the birthday of Christ."

"Against all evidence"! It is interpolations such as these, made by irresponsible contributors to Protestant popular works of reference, which poison the wells. The main argument against midwinter's being the birth-time of Our Lord is based upon a commentary of the gifted yet maniacal "Tribulation" Cumming, written around the verse of St. Luke which tells us that "there were shepherds feeding their flocks." Dr. Cumming did not know his Palestine. Himself a Scotchman, like the encyclopædist, he knew that "Caledonia, stern and wild," affords poor pasturage at the winter solstice. With insular logic, and the curious conviction, shared by millions of others, that because the language of the Authorized Version is British all else it contains must be British also, he maintained that Christmas befell in summer. Any tourist of to-day could tell him, if only out of Baedeker's authoritative "Guide to Palestine and Syria," that the deep, lush valleys below Bethlehem have warm, mild weather throughout the winter, however shrewdly the night winds may sometimes blow on the heights above, where is perched the little "House of Bread." One could say more, but it suffices ourselves that Our Lady knew when Our Lord was born; that she told the Apostles, who told the Primitive Church (which could have consulted the official Roman registers

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had it listed*) ; and that all Christendom for two thousand years, in spite of the Eastern scission and the German revolt, knows when to sing its *Adeste Fideles*. As to the really pretty fable of Mithra, we may quote Mr. Martindale as follows :

“ The sun rising daily from the mountains was early mythologically represented as the birth of Mithra from a stone ; and in the temples the image of a conical rock was venerated, from which (usually) a naked child, wearing the Phrygian cap, was seen emerging. This birth will ultimately have been placed on December 25, the winter solstice, when the sun enters on his career of increase, and when all solar cults joined in celebrating the *Natalis Solis Invicti*, or Birthday of the Unconquered Sun.”

Mithraism was about the best of man-made creeds that may be set down as forms of sun-worship—the cult of the Irish ancestors of most of us before St. Patrick, and of the wise men from the East before they were given grace to follow the Star. Perhaps only contemplative Saints can tell us if there be deep symbolism in the Divine fact that Our Lord—the *Sol Justitiæ*—chose to dawn upon us when the bright sun He created begins to exult, like a giant in running his way.

Those who are “ enemies of the Cross of Christ ” are indeed hard put to it when they must dig up the bones of Mithraism, and dig them up at second-hand, too, from the great Catholic works of Cumont in recent years. This well-known Belgian scholar has produced an epoch-making book in his study of

* Tertullian mentions that the documents were accessible in his time, about A.D. 150-220.

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Mithraic "mysteries," which may be said to have been unknown before his time. Yet, even so, and with all M. Cumont's stores of erudition and of wise comment on a long-perished man-made creed, it is piteous at this time of day to find unbelievers stealing isolated facts from a Christian teacher to throw at that teacher's God. What Mr. Martindale says on this point may be applied, with but obvious modifications, to the whole wearying, unstable, and lucklessly popular argument that because there are man-made creeds outside Revelation, God's Revelation itself is of human devising :

" Even those general conceptions concerning the nature of God and the destiny of the soul in which Mithraism seems to approximate to Christian doctrine do not in any way outstrip the known possibilities of human reason. 'Natural reason can tell us much about God and the soul : the conscience everywhere recognizes a moral law with its sanctions. But nothing can show the cults to have interacted. Indeed, not only were Christianity and Mithraism formed apart, but they spread along different lines. Christianity, coming from Palestine—a region unaffected by Mithraic influences—travelled, by way of Jewish colonies, along the Mediterranean coasts, in the big towns. Practically nothing of Roman Mithraism has been found in Asia Minor and Syria, where Christianity first triumphed. The Persian god moved, where social and political forces had prepared his way, by the military frontiers (Christians at first shunned the army) and the great trade-routes.

" When Christianity and Mithraism faced one

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another as serious rivals—in Rome especially, or large ports like Ostia—all will, I think, agree that Mithraism was fully developed, and very few, if any, will now maintain that Christianity had not, by then, developed her main forms of cult and doctrine, or treated the notion of alien contamination with anything but abhorrence. Moreover, the history of the Jewish Church is now so well known, and, to any unbiassed judge, the origins of Christianity are so irrefutably focussed in the Person of Our Lord Himself, that it becomes wholly gratuitous and arbitrary to suppose an indefinitely distant ancestor from which Mithraism and Christianity alike descend."

* * * * *

From the mere scholastic view-point, no youth reading classics or history should be allowed to remain in oblivion of the few-cent existence of such wonderful studies as "Athenian Philosophers" (Father H. Browne, S.J.), "Early Rome" (Rev. C. Martindale, S.J.), "Imperial Rome" (by the same), "Ancient King-Worship" (Rev. C. Lattey); besides those of the series that I have quoted, others that I have not, and the rest that will be procurable by the time these lines appear.

I could speak much on the use of the series in Catholic exposition to the opponent who terms himself "the plain man," or the "man in the street." From personal experience I have been led to label such "comparative religionists" as individuals of saloon or magazine mentality. Yet these have prejudices to remove, and chasms of ignorance to fill, poor fellows! Also they have souls to save.

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This last consideration must have been present to the mind of the fellow-student of Father Matthew Russell, S.J., who was wont to ask his professor after an erudite argument : “ Sed quid dicendum de hâc rê in viâ ferreâ, domine ? ” — “ But how should we deal with this matter in a railway-carriage argument, sir ? ”

Not all Catholic arguments can be made effectual *in viâ ferreâ*, for we are there too often confronted by “ deliberate ignorance, by shallow insouciance, or by petted sin.” Yet, praised be God, and praised also the honester human nature He has never despised,* there are exceptions. When we come across them—we layfolk, I mean—it will be well if we know by brain and by heart, not only other and more vital Catholic teaching, but also the purport of the series I am now commending. “ My brethren, if any of you err from the truth and one convert him, he must know that he who causeth a sinner to be converted from the error of his way shall save his soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins.”†

I conclude with an eloquent passage from one of these new penny books—books that perhaps we should value more (so fatuous is human nature in demands on its purse) if they cost us higher money. The writer is giving his summing-up on the man-made creeds of the Rome of the Pagan emperors :

“ We shall be far indeed from scorning or reviling the impulse which gave rise to any of these forms

* For He bade His angels sing “ peace to men of good-will.”

† St. Jas. v. 19, 20.

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of worship. They prove two things : the passionate outstretch of the soul after God, and the helplessness of human nature, left to itself, to attain Him. They prove that man wanted a God, one, supreme, powerful, loving, just—a God, too, Who was revealed ; Who knew death and suffering, but Who triumphed over death ; Who communicated His Nature in some inexplicably intimate way to the hungry soul. They prove that man knew he was sinful, and needed penance of his own, and redemption from his God, and purification even beyond the grave, as he journeyed to the final joy. They prove that Virginity, Motherhood, Sacraments, Priesthood, are essentially congenial to the human heart and mind.

“Amid the maddest aberrations of lust and cruelty, scarcely less than in the sublimest philosophies and asceticism, the soul-effort is discernible. ‘Tendebantque manus ripæ ulterioris amore,’ says Virgil, in an exquisite line, of the souls not yet at peace in death—‘They were stretching out their hands in longing for the further shore.’ Centuries ago, Plato himself had seen that the most poor Humanity could do was to cast itself into the troubled waters of life, clinging to what spars of chance, hope, or guess, or myth, or rite, it might hap upon, until the day when it should win to the other side, ‘on the surer barque of some Divine doctrine.’ That Divine doctrine, and, above all, a new Divine strength, came in Christ, born at Bethlehem, dying upon Calvary, risen, and living in His Church. Men now have what they always wanted, always tried to get, and never won, though at times success appeared so imminent. ‘Paganism,’ says St. Augus-

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tine ('Confessions,' vii. 21), 'saw, at least, the road from its hill-top.' 'Believe me,' cries the Christian poet Prudentius (*cf.* 'Contra Symmachum,' ii. 620), 'even in those days the road was prepared for Christ upon His way.' Man had, for the first time, perhaps, in history, become fully conscious of his needs and of his helplessness. Hence that fertile crop of novelties in religion; hence that undercurrent of despair in those who had gone highest. Hence, too, a recognition, possible to us better than to our predecessors, of how amazingly Christianity suits the human nature it has come to transform and lift up to divinity. Man was prepared for it, and it for man. The completest man is the Christian."*

* "The Religion of Imperial Rome," by Rev. C. Martindale, S.J., pp. 30 and 31.

XI

THE PRIEST AS FATHER AND FRIEND

“ Who, in the winter’s night,
Soggarth aroon,
When the cold blast did bite,
Soggarth aroon,
Came to my cabin door,
And on my earthen floor
Knelt by me, sick and poor ?
Soggarth aroon.”

JOHN BANIM.

“ SOGGARTH aroon ”—the “ dear priest.” The two Irish words were rolled into a single Italian one—“ Monsignor ”—by certain Famine exiles in an English village, of whom two were my parents. “ Monsignor ” took his honours very lightly in our midst, a minute red cord (or “ piping,” as ladies call it) alone distinguishing his black cassock from that of other priests. Elsewhere, I believe, he “ pontificated ” rather magnificently, and in full insignia. But this was seldom, and we did not see it. We should have thought it quite right if we had, for Monsignor was a cadet of the oldest landed Catholic family in England, and the red piping on his cassock meant that he was a Protonotary Apostolic, who (I imagine) is a personage of dis-

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tion at the Vatican whenever he is called upon to "protonote." I never head that "Monsignor" was so called. During fifty years he lived over eleven months annually in the funniest little house you ever saw, all front windows and clematis and draughts, with the River Thames and a lime-wharf to one side of him, the wharf giving employment to vocal and extremely un-Catholic bargemen. On the other flank was a range of evil-smelling stables, in which horses and cows were herded promiscuously together, not forgetting a male goat, who generally stood sentry at the window, and was a personal friend of mine. But I must permit myself no digressions about that goat, whose affections were first cemented unto mine when I fed him with unsmokable ship's tobacco, found in old belongings of a seafaring elder brother.

There "Monsignor" lived, from the agonies of the Famine Dispersion till the grandchildren of his earliest *émigrés* were marrying. There, too, in long days of work and night-watches (so old servants deposed after his death) before the Tabernacle, he taught his wayward but lovable flock what St James meant by "religion clean and undefiled before God and the Father."

I can wager confidently that there are not five of my readers well into the twenties—or shall we say bluntly, who are full thirty years of age—but can find this thumb-nail sketch familiar. "It is a crude drawing," they will say, "done with a burnt stick and a very hasty hand, of *any* of the priests I knew at home. They were not all Monsignori and the rest, but these are details. The writer has given a

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brief but correct enough impression of—well, of a Catholic parish priest."

The other five, who will say sententiously that I am idyllicizing the life of the first priest I knew, will save themselves a little trouble later on by overhauling their consciences. I have placed their number at five because, in my experience, folks of their sort do not read much Catholic literature, except when they have nothing else to do, or when a more Catholic member of their families, so to say, compels them. And I make the suggestion that they should go to their duties because (it so chances) I have never once in a lifetime come across the male Catholic, of any race, who could combine flippant disrespect for the priesthood with the frequentation of the Sacraments. "*Soggarth aroon*" for such! No, indeed; but they will hum "*Eileen Aroon*" all day long, especially if *soggarth aroon* raised his eyebrows when he heard that Eileen was a Protestant, or brought them down with a snap as he remembered her divorce.

Leaving out, however, all questions that were better treated from the pulpit by one commissioned to the office, why *is* it that the generation which has grown up to legal manhood, whilst the writer gropes tediously through the last of the thirties, should be so prone to bore its elders with shallow irreverence at the expense of the Catholic priesthood? Why *is* it?

One explanation arraigns young priest-eaters of ignorance, at best, and it is impossible not to accept it—as far as it goes.

Like most explanations that can adequately be

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given in a single word, the reason enfolds whole libraries of information, as does, for instance, my personal nescience of Sanskrit, or your own of the Chinese language. Yet you and I, however ignorant of the Upanishad and of Confucius in the original, know ever so much of our priest, our *soggarth aroon*. And thus we find (I speak of the land I know best, though Younger America, it is whispered, is not always faultless in this vital matter) that those who are prone to work off cheap witticisms at men who cannot hit back are monumentally ignorant—are lacking, indeed, in all seven highest qualities of the human intellect. They need wisdom and understanding to know good men when they see them. They are without counsel and fortitude to proclaim their conviction in the face of the meaner forms of human respect. They have neither knowledge (which includes discernment) nor piety to revere Christ in the humblest of His ministers; nor have they enough fear of the Lord to keep their mouths shut when a priest is being discussed behind his back.

“But,” one of them will say with mingled gusto and triumph, “you never knew Father So-and-so, who did this, that, and the other, down at such a place, where I was raised.”

The tone of the sentence is more bewildering than its scandalous content, which, by the way, is often completely false. One does not *shout* the defects of one's father or friend with glee. Noe's grandson and his children were blackened through the ages for the like. What you cannot bring home to your young friend is the infamous bad taste of it all.

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It is easy enough to convince him of fatuity. "What!" you may say, "because there was a Judas among the Twelve, are we not to love the Eleven—nay, the full Twelve, with Matthias; the Thirteen, the Fourteen, indeed, with Paul and Barnabas? Your argument would condone the practical suicide of a man who should discard his pith helmet under an Indian sun because astronomers had announced a solar spot. Sane men have a sense of proportion. They don't worry about spots. They pay heed to the sun."

Your man will probably agree. But he has lost his sense of the fatherhood and friendship of the clergy. You cannot bring home to him that he has been guilty, one likes not to say of the *crime*, but of the abominable *bad form* of Cham and his impish son Chanaan. O brothers, whenever or wheresoever a *soggarth* makes a mistake, let us stand with Sem and Japheth, who put a cloak upon their shoulders, and, going backward, covered the nakedness of their father. St. Gregory most clearly explains their action as a lesson of primitive revelation that we should "cover" the faults of our spiritual fathers and friends.*

The holiest layman I knew was an unlettered and aged Irishman, who told me many things of the heroism of his own *soggarth* during the Famine years. This good priest got into some trouble with his Bishop for a fault of indiscipline, and was "silenced" for a while—"silencing" being the expressive Munster locution for what canon law terms suspension. Now the "silencing" came into the record

* See Challoner's note to Gen. ix. 23.

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of self-sacrifice I was listening to. Truly it was a sun-spot invisible amid the radiance. But, being both young and foolish, I inquired the cause of it. The old man fenced with my question, and his face grew grave. I persisted, and at length he told me. It was a defect of discipline, as I have said, and venial enough, thank God, yet calling for the censure of authority when the hunger and fever were over. My old friend looked steadily into the fire while he spoke the words with bated breath ; then, locking his fingers over his breast, he bowed his head and cried a little. The open humiliation of his *soggarth aroon*—his father, his friend—though it lasted but for days, had remained all those years in the old man's mind, and he wept when a careless hand reopened the wound.

Speaking of certain men of my own race, a priest told me once that in his long experience he had divided their death-beds into three categories. He was not considering the cases of Irishmen who had stood firm in faith and practice, but of the sad wrecks abounding in our cities. Confining himself to his own personal knowledge, he said that the man who always came to Sunday Mass—however far to seek his Easter duties were—always asked for the Sacraments when the end approached. The man who had fallen lower still, and clove to no Catholic practice, save that of Friday abstinence, could readily be coaxed to repentance at the last. "In fact," he added, "there is hope for every son of Ireland who so much as salutes a priest when he meets him in the street. But the grimmest endings I have known—I am not speaking of accidents, but

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of deaths preceded by illness—the death-beds that make one shudder, have been of the third class—the men who kept their hats on defiantly when passing their parish priest.”

The anti-clerical is only Antichrist hiding his war-paint. We have object-lessons enough of this in France. One of the most pathetic things at the Eucharistic Congress in London was the artless delight of the visiting French clergy at being so frequently saluted in the streets by passing Catholics. Yet the custom is on the wane. A very annoying and most unworthy ruse of the High Church clergy in the Anglican Establishment has notably lessened the practice, which, minute in itself, was consoling to priest and people, and had results that far outsoared the grimy canopy of London. For years “our friends the enemy” have imitated the Roman collars worn by our clergy, or bought them ready-made from Catholic firms. A contemporary wit said bitterly once, after being sartorially trapped into a salute by a Protestant clergyman thus disguised: “They are indeed not Papists; they are apists.”

But I think the time has come for us to be less solicitous. Surely it is better to doff our hats, in a day's march through some unknown city, to maybe a brace of “Anglo-Catholic” ministers who, in actor's phrase, have “dressed the part,” than to leave unreverenced our own fathers and friends, whom we know not personally, indeed, but whose lips are scarce dry from the morning chalice.

There was a certain worthy High Church English vicar who “dressed the part,” and mowed his ample

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chin as closely as any of our own secular clergy. He was proud when he embezzled a salute from some "Roman" of the working classes, and most happy for the rest of that day. Yet his "triumphs" were so few that he formed a working theory of explanation, which he imparted to a friend, who afterwards became a Catholic, and told me all about it. "It is due to the Roman mouth," said the vicar. "We can never hope to imitate *that*." This was mysterious, and led to a natural question. "Oh, the 'Roman mouth,' as I call it," explained the vicar, "is the expression left on a man's face by his having to repeat the *Beati immaculati in viâ* every day of his life for a lifetime."

"Blessed are the unspotted in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord." Our poorest people in England here used to be able to know at a glance the priestly mien which the parson termed the "Roman mouth," and which cannot be conferred by the closest of shaves or the newest and most Roman of collars. In later years there have been mistakes; our people have grown suspicious; and thus priests who are travelling are often denied the obeisance due to their office from Catholics who do not know them. I think *all* Catholics (both priests and lay-folk) should wear some small, unobtrusive outward emblem of the faith. Many Christian Romans of imperial days used to carry a trinket shaped like a fish upon their breast, even when persecution was at its hottest. As is well known, the letters composing the Greek word for "fish" are the initials of the brief act of faith, "Jesus Christ [is] the Son of God, the Saviour." The mystic symbo-

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lism of this is exquisitely ingenious, and seems to have eluded all the persecutors, save perhaps an apostate spy or two. Cardinal Manning's device was more prosaic. He desired his clergy to wear the top-hat of commerce, instead of the comfortable soft sombrero affected by ministers of almost all religions in England. The silk "topper" is costly and uncomfortable, but the clergy obeyed. And the "apists" of Anglicanism forthwith followed in their wake. What is one to do with such people? I solemnly aver that if authority should ever order our priests to black their faces with burnt cork when they go abroad, at least *some* ordained ministers of the Church of England would walk the streets like end-men from the nearest minstrel show. Yet these are the people who preach independence of Rome to their flocks.

Perhaps too much has been said upon this point, which might summarily have been dismissed with a single heart-felt observation of Puck's in the "Midsummer Night's Dream," "Lord, what fools these mortals be!" made when everybody in the drama is being mistaken for somebody else. Let the whole question of Anglican masquerading now go by the board, with a murrain on it. It is only one of the causes which rob our priests of the respect that is their due.

Let us get nearer the root of the matter. Is not the disrespect of the child born of parental *criticism*? I am putting matters at their mildest. I have written "criticism," too, not "calumny." And I have not said *unfair* criticism either. Perhaps in this age of microscopic scrutiny no man exists, from

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Pope to peasant, whose words and deeds are not held under the lens. Well for the holder if that lens be true and free from errors of refraction. Now *criticism*, in its original sense, meant no more than *judgment*, but the stain of Adam's fall shows linguistically nowhere* so manifest as in the fact that conversational "*criticism*" to-day implies an *adverse* verdict. I have heard innumerable "*criticisms*" (in the sense of condemnations) passed upon priests in petty matters while the children of my hosts were present in the room. I had almost as lief have the latest suicide discussed before those little ones, who seem to pay no attention, yet greedily drink in every detail. Parents should remember that "father and mother" are a child's final court of appeal. If the priest, whom childish instincts (alike of nature and of grace) are prompting them to love, is arraigned behind his back and in their presence of a hundred faults—mulish obstinacy, it may be, and general folly, and particularly Philistine bad taste in the disposal of the new heating apparatus—how will little hearts go out to him when he prepares them for their First Communion?

There are many other matters besides the horrors St. Paul alludes to which must not be so much as mentioned amongst us if children are within ear-shot. Quite first amongst these is adverse criticism of the clergy.

The "praiser of days gone by"—*laudator temporis acti*—is scourged by the Roman satirist, I think

* Save, perhaps, in the expression "*maudlin* tears," the contemptuous adjective being a corruption of St. Mary Magdalene's name.

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unjustly. For his praise may help history to repeat herself, as she is wont to do when persistently coaxed to give encores of her wholesomer tunes. I can only say that, in constant intercourse with people now elderly—the earliest-born children of Famine emigrants—I have secured abundant testimony that not one of them ever *once* heard adverse criticism of the *soggarth aroon*. But then, in the Famine itself their elders refrained from murmuring at God. And in my later memories they never carped at their neighbour, either, before the children, save perhaps once in a way with whimsical banter—"the wit that loves to play, not wound." When I was a child I learnt to guess, but only very vaguely, that there was some more serious scandal in our little community when my elders whispered inaudibly, or with curt covertness, or in Irish, a tongue I understood not. They had heard of the fate worse than that of the millstone about one's neck in mid-ocean. They acted accordingly.

Alack, in this same village (or "suburb," as real estate advertisements are beginning to call it) priest-eating is a habit with parents and a pastime for children. I was minded to slay a wretched small male Thing one Sunday morning, who remarked, under my nose, that Father So-and-so was a fool. Then I reflected that the urchin had probably had this instilled into him overnight by his father, and relaxed the grip I had taken of my walking-stick. At his age I would have expected bears to devour me if I had thought such a thing. Some of the "old guard," who stood with me at the chapel gates, looked ominously at the child, and I

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must say that he fled, and that his schoolmaster afterwards made earnest inquiries concerning his identity. The sombre thing was that I was confirmed by others in my opinion that young England in the South is encouraged at home to forget what a priest is. "A priest clad in his sacred vestments is Christ's vicegerent, to pray to God for himself and for all the people in a suppliant and humble manner. . . . When a priest celebrateth, he honoureth God, he rejoiceth the angels, he edifieth the Church, he helpeth the living, he obtaineth rest for the dead, and maketh himself partaker of all that is good."

Until this *supernatural* view of the priest's fatherhood and friendship is hammered down by parents into the child's soul until it becomes bedrock, no lasting edifice of respect and love for the clergy can be erected. No human good qualities possessed and displayed by the *soggarth*, even when sanctified by the loftiest of motives, can create the holy atmosphere of Banim's poem in the modern child, all at once and out of the void. It must be engendered by long Christian training and example at home :

"Who, as friend only met,
Soggarth aroon,
Never did flout me yet,
Soggarth aroon ;
And, when my eye was dim,
Gave, while his eye did brim,
What I should give to him ?
Soggarth aroon."

Such self-sacrifice and generosity are the most winning of all human virtues, and the briefest morning offering makes them supernatural. But they

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will not be welcomed by the modern child when he sees them accepted by his parents with transient ebullience of gratitude, followed by spells of moroser ill-nature than before. The weak-kneed Catholic, who has received material aid from a priest, is that priest's severest "critic," once the wolf has gone from the door. The Devil's gospel of "get on or get out," which has for some years wrecked two English-speaking hemispheres, makes the careless Catholic who wins charity from a priest look upon the latter as what the child said in the chapel-yard—a fool. His Reverence will be proud of the title. There is such a thing as "the folly of the cross."

Yet how different it used to be! I was prepared for my first Confession by an Italian Father of the Pious Society of Missions. In Italy his Brothers are familiarly termed the "Pallottini," from the name of their holy founder, Father Pallotti, whom we hope soon to be venerating on our altars. Father D. was chaplain at a London "short-sentence" prison. The whole British convict system is peculiarly brutal, but the "short-timers" get the worst of it while they *are* behind the bars. They are really starved. Poor Father D.'s warm Southern heart was touched, and he began to smuggle food to his famine-stricken penitents. With the ingenuous cunning of the essentially simple mind, he had a wondrous coat constructed, such as a conjuror might use, but strictly clerical in cut. It was fitted with "secret" pockets in almost every seam. Within these he packed such provisions as he could get, to give to them that were in bonds when the warders were not looking.

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Of course he was found out, and there was the deuce to pay. Luckily the governor of the gaol respected Father D., and in lieu of ignominious dismissal and direr "pains and penalties in such case made and provided," there was only a flutter in the newspapers and a temporary suspension of Father D.'s prison services. After that I imagine he privately gave his parole not to import any edible contraband, for he was once again chaplain when (far from those grim stone walls) he taught me and others what we know of Contrition, Confession, and Satisfaction.

But the coat grew old and gaped at the seams, and we boys knew the story. How we loved that coat and the priest it clothed ! And how entirely right and natural it seemed to us that ruffians and "crooks" of both sexes and the worst descriptions should be fed in their famine and won to Christ by a priest at the gravest risk ! I think that if any of us had said Father D. was foolish, that boy would have been hurt considerably. Father D. used to give us thrills at the heart whenever he came to teach us. You can tell when a little boy is thrilled. Either he grins cavernously, without changing colour, or he flushes a little and beams. All of us did one or the other. Yet I must insist that we were taught at home to give our affection to all other priests, without any distinction, in the same impulsive way. It is true that two good priests of whom I saw much in childhood had done things which fire a boy's imagination. One had confronted a ruffian in the sanctuary, who was armed with dagger and pistol, and mastered the fellow bare-handed. Another had

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incurred terrible lameness that might arouse the loathly mirth of some children of to-day, when carrying the Holy Viaticum by night in some perilous mountain district. Yet I can testify that "Mon-signor," whom we saw daily, gave us the same strange plucking at the heart-strings when we were very small children, and that, instead of receiving his blessing *en bloc* when school was over, we used to run and dispose ourselves along the village street that we might so win it severally, whenever we saw him in the distance.

* * * * *

I have not cared, because I have not dared, to probe this question very deeply. If I did so, I should be writing a lay sermon, from which, as from the "ferocious O'Flaherties," in the Latin prayer once graven on Galway Gate, may the good Lord deliver us! A friend has suggested to me that if I were to write these words, "Let our exiled Irish folk revert to the nightly rosary, said in common, and all their children will revere the priest," my task would be done forthwith. Perhaps. But not, on second thoughts, *my* task. *My* task is to keep well away from the pulpit, which is better occupied, and to pop only occasionally into the sacristy to peer at a book. "Around it and around it and about." I am no lover of FitzGerald, but I think the words belong to him, or to Omar Khayyám, the old Persian astronomer with a thirst, whose refurbished pessimism is considered the last word of criticism on life by many "intense" young ladies. "Around it and around it and about." Let me throw down upon the table a card in defence of my circuitousness.

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Here it is for you, kind readers. I am convinced that more than one-half of the disrespect shown by certain of the younger generation to their clergy in the South of England the moment they leave school arises from the fact that the priest stands for Christianity, which stands for the virtue of holy purity.

Of course, our better-circumstanced young folks are not poisoned like this by words or deeds at home. They pick up their carrion from novels. Listen to the following from the *British Weekly*, a leading English Protestant organ :

"The truth is that Christianity is hated and reviled by many of our modern writers simply because it exalts chastity. Let us try every new doctrine by this test. Only a few have had the courage to come out into the open, but to those who read between the lines there is much that is suggestive. We are told that marriage is to be put on a new basis, that the causes for divorce are to be extended, that lives are not going to be spoiled for one mistake, and all the rest of it. This is the exoteric teaching. This is all that it is safe to say in the meantime in the presence of the people, but the esoteric teaching, and sometimes the practice, is much more advanced. There is a true instinct under all this. It was Christianity that created the virtue of purity, and it is Christianity alone that can save it. Christianity opposes the progress of Apollyon in this path. Christianity maintains the sanctity of marriage and of the family. It is no wonder, therefore, that it should be viewed as an irreconcilable enemy, to be overthrown at any cost.

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But it is just as well that we should understand what the battle is about."

Apollyon has reason to dread the *soggarth aroon*, and thus hates him, and instils his loathing into all obsessed souls, both within and without the body of the Church.

Never was the necessity of defending our priests and of exposing the tactics of their assailants more urgent than it is at present. As the *Liverpool Catholic Times* has well said : " There is on foot an international conspiracy to revile and belittle them, to hold them up to scorn, to disparage their work, and to destroy their influence. The opponents of the Church are fighting a battle in which every movement of theirs is well directed. They know that, so long as the clergy are respected, esteemed, trusted, the contest will be a losing one for the unbelievers, and they accordingly endeavour to strike down at any cost these faithful leaders of the Catholic hosts."

Well, it is a comfort to know that in the Ireland which is home there is no fear of a rift in the harmony of priests and people. In the Ireland that spreads over all the far lands of the dispersion only few precautions need be taken, urgent as those few are. The Pope's invitation to frequent and daily Communion would remove all minor incivilities on the part of children in a week or a month at the very outside. When Pope Pius is fully obeyed, assuredly a golden age will dawn upon teachers and taught, whatever earthly trouble or even persecution may be permitted to befall those " who would live godly in Christ Jesus." Love of God, love of home, love

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of faith, love of fatherland, love of priests as our first and final friends—all these will bloom in our hearts with flowers unto eternity :

“ Who, on the marriage-day,
Soggarth aroon,
Made the poor cabin gay,
Soggarth aroon ;
And did both laugh and sing,
Making our walls to ring,
At the poor christening ?
Soggarth aroon. . . .

“ Och ! you, and only you,
Soggarth aroon ;
And for this I was true to you,
Soggarth aroon.
In love they'll never shake,
When for Old Ireland's sake,
We a true part did take,
Soggarth aroon.”

XII

OUR LADY AND SOME LITTLE ANGELS*

SOME association of sounds and syllables in the second name of Richard Hurrell Froude, the "bright and beautiful boy" of the Oxford Movement, seems to connote the haste, the spiritual hurry, of his short, consumption-stricken life. He was an eager goad, and (so far as in him lay) a not far erring compass to Keble and Newman in their quest of the desired haven, which but one of them attained on this side of the veil. His "Remains" show him to have been a holy young man throughout all his unguided austerities. They prove, too, that the Incarnation was the pole-star from which his heart and intellect, like the magnetic needle, never once deflected. It is therefore both mournful and amusing to find placid Dons of his period (roughly speaking, 1835) falling foul of his writings, especially as they were collected by Newman and Keble, because Our Lord's name is seldom, if ever, mentioned on the printed page in the two sweet syllables

* "Behold Your Mother!" The Blessed Virgin's Goodness and Greatness. By Father Matthew Russell, S.J. M. H. Gill and Son, Dublin. Also "Little Angels," by the same. Burns and Oates, London.

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composing it. Odder still is it to read that controversial enemies of the great Father Rosmini—a pillar of the Faith in troublous Italian days, when the backwash of the French Revolution still troubled his fatherland—decried some few of his books because the Name in which every knee must bow was excluded from them, one may say inevitably, and by the technical nature of the subjects treated. In my own youth I remember a solemn person—not an ecclesiastic—advising me to read Dickens most cautiously, because the Holy Name was not mentioned in any of his novels. By the way, my adviser was mistaken. Our Lord is mentioned with deepest reverence and something like a note of faith in “Our Mutual Friend” and also in “Dombey and Son.”

Such criticism always reminds me of a working-man who told me that one of his fellows was a “very religious chap.” I knew the individual in question, and had failed to detect devotion in him. “How do you mean that he is very religious?” I asked. “Oh,” said my acquaintance lightly, “he talks a lot about God and that kind of thing. That’s religion, isn’t it?”

I am shielding myself with these words of preface because I have had occasion to mention Our Lady’s name, and to deal specifically with her glories, so very seldom hitherto. The appearance of Father Matthew Russell’s new work, “Behold Your Mother!” gives me a happy opportunity of remedying this as our task now draws to a close.

This is a book of spiritual reading—a work devised and adapted to become the basis of prayer, to form and to consolidate piety. Small as it is, it amply fulfils the three requisites laid down by Père de

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Ravignan : " In order that (spiritual) reading may produce precious results in you, it must have three qualifications : (1) It must be solid ; (2) it must be appropriate to yourself ; (3) it must be consecutive. Solid—that is to say, this reading must be made in works that are really pious, and written by persons accustomed to treat these kinds of subjects. Appropriate—that is, in accordance with your position in the world, with the disposition of your heart, with your peculiar turn of mind, which you must consult a little even in devout things, as a sort of clue given you by God to indicate the road you are to take to go to Him. . . . Also your reading must be consecutive. When you have commenced a book, go straight through it, not taking it up and putting it down for another."

Taking these three points of solidity, congruity, and consecutiveness in the reverse order, it may be said safely that the least methodical of Catholics who love Our Lady will not be able to pick up Father Russell's book without reading it through from start to finish. In the second place, the style has an aptness and actuality that one might be tempted to style novel were not the truths it embodies as old and as firmly based as the everlasting hills. The congruity or " appropriateness " to present-day conditions demanded in spiritual reading by Père de Ravignan is further aided by Father Russell's wealth of contemporary citation, made very often from thoughtful non-Catholic writers. As to the " solidity " of the book, Father Russell's signature is warrant for this.

A new generation of readers is sent forth from

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our schools and colleges and convents every year—or if this be untrue in strict human chronology, then a new annual *swarm* from our scholastic hives, who may well wish to learn in their own language what their grandparents learned in theirs, when France was paying the milliards to Germany, nigh forty years ago. In giving some extracts from this book we shall still be following the strong guidance of Père de Ravignan. “When you are reading,” he says, “why should you not make an occasional note of those things most suitable to your soul? You will look at these notes afterwards with both pleasure and profit, and thus will lose nothing which might be for the good of your soul, or for the furtherance of your spiritual progress.”

To our notes, then. And, if even fortuitous *jeux de mots* can be pardoned in a pun-hating age, our first note is that the “Hail Mary” is a note of the Catholic Church.

“Yes, the Feast of the Annunciation is the Feast of the ‘Hail Mary.’ The ‘Hail Mary’ is by itself a sufficient note of the true Church of God. If we could imagine the archangel Gabriel sent back to this earth, so far ignorant as to require such marks and tokens to distinguish the Christian Church from all pretenders, the ‘Hail Mary’ would be proof enough for him. It would be easy for him to discover those who use his words, who follow his example, who adopt his attitude to the Blessed Mother of our Redeemer, and so pronounce that those who act thus are the true children of the Church which the Son of Mary established upon earth.”*

* “Behold Your Mother!” pp. 41, 42.

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Ten pages later* Father Russell reverts to the same fine thought :

" The Blessed Virgin's place in the New Dispensation is, indeed, the most obvious of Christian truths, and it is not easy to let our minds rest on it, even in a passing way, without feeling ourselves moved to renew in our hearts our vows of loving and faithful allegiance to the Church in which alone we find the Child with His Mother. The ' Hail Mary ' is a sufficient sign of the true Church of Christ."

Almost at the end of the fragrant little book Father Russell strikes the same chord as on its fifth page, where he writes that " one of the plainest signs that mark out the Catholic Church as the one true Church of Christ is her attitude toward the Mother of Christ." " We pray to her who was given to us as a Mother from the Cross," he exclaims on p. 163 ; " we bless her and praise her, and entreat her to exercise on our behalf the ' suppliant omnipotence ' of a mother ; and the Church which trains her children to speak, and feel, and act in this manner towards the Mother of Jesus shows by this sign alone that she is the Church which Jesus founded on earth."

This is luminous. Yet, as all that is resplendent is not so from within as from without (do not astronomers tell us that the very sun himself is rather hollow ?), it is well to add swiftly that it is solid. " *All* our joys do flow from Mary," sings St. Casimir in the well-known hymn. Perhaps the word " through " would have been better than " from " in the English translation, made for use in lands where separated brethren do not realize the

* P. 51.

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simple fact that Catholics believe Christ Our Lord to be the Source of all grace. But the line causes ourselves no misapprehension. The Son is the Source; the Mother, by her free *Fiat* at the Annunciation, the voluntary conduit. Love of Mary is not a luxury of Catholic devotion like (shall we say?) a lifelong special reverence for the Holy Innocents, such as one is allured to by Father Russell's second and nearly simultaneous book, "Little Angels," that we shall open presently. Love of Mary is a Catholic duty. Outsiders have long since recognized this, while misunderstanding and misrepresenting it in the clumsy and mendacious word "Mariolatry." Inside the Church one meets (among certain men) too many timorous souls who have grave need to remember Cardinal Newman's advice, written in a letter to one of their number: "You may reverence Our Lady as much as you will, provided you revere Our Lord infinitely more." There is the Catholic doctrine and practice in a nutshell.

Father Russell's book abounds in passages from non-Catholic writers whose devotion to the Blessed Virgin in prose or verse is what the Church requires. Even the unquoted Kipling (a poet who, I think, does not appeal much to the author of "Sonnets on the Sonnet") has this in his "Hymn Before Action":

"As each was born of woman,
For each, in utter need,
True comrade or brave foeman,
Madonna, intercede!"

As to the word "Mariolatry," it must have been coined by some opponent whose Greek had made him forget his Hebrew, in which language was first

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written the great command : " Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour." To God alone do Catholics offer sacrifice. But sacrificial doctrine disappeared from the minds of our adversaries three hundred and fifty years ago, when they devised blasphemies against the Holy Eucharist, repeated since by English monarchs at their accession to the throne. Supreme worship, which is the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and the supreme prayer of adoration (*latria*), is offered to God alone. We pray Our Lady to pray for us. The smallest of our school-children who can read and write a little know this. One hopes that the oldest of our adversaries are honestly and invincibly ignorant of the lucid and inevitable distinction, because otherwise they are sinning against the light vouchsafed to " some also of their own poets."*

Father Russell's wide range of reading enables him to dismiss the whole charge of " Mariolatry " in a single quotation, with an apt and very brief comment :

" Some fifty or sixty years ago a very intelligent Protestant, Sir John Forbes, who was physician to the Queen, published an interesting book under the title of ' Memoranda of a Tour in Ireland.' Here is one of his Irish notes :

" ' Among my inquiries as to the religious doctrines of Catholics of the humbler classes in Ireland I did not forget the subject of the Virgin Mary, and I am bound in honesty to state that I never met with one, even the humblest and most ignorant, who did not deny that they worshipped her as they worship God. They said that they venerated her as higher

* Acts xvii. 28.

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and holier even than Saints and Angels, but prayed to her only to pray for them.'

"So it is with all ranks of the pious faithful in all lands. We pray to her who was given to us as a Mother from the Cross; we bless her and praise her, and entreat her to exercise on our behalf the 'Suppliant Omnipotence' of a mother; and the Church which trains her children to speak and feel and act in this manner towards the Mother of Jesus shows by this sign alone that she is the Church which Jesus founded upon earth."*

The heresy of the Albigenses was suppressed far more effectually by the Rosary than by the military measures of Simon de Montfort (too often confused with his namesake and fourth son, who founded parliamentary institutions, many think, under Henry III. of England). Do our less outspoken Albigenses of to-day, the Modernists, say their beads? I have known but one of their tribe. I feel convinced that his reply to the question would be: "I can *read*, you see." Father Russell has not once mentioned these bookish misbelievers in "Behold Your Mother!" Why should he? Yet this passage may give them pause:

"Yes, the use of the Rosary beads is by no means to be confined to those who cannot read, who cannot use a Prayer-Book, or other book of devotion. Even priests, who are compelled (blessed compulsion!) to give a considerable proportion of their day to the ritual and liturgy of the Church, must not reckon the Rosary among those private devotions which may be supposed to be satisfied by the devout

* P. 163.

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recitation of the Divine Office. I will venture to emphasize this point by the authority of a priest who is dead nearly forty years. Yet some in Ireland, even outside the Society to which he belonged, remember still the holy and gifted Father Daniel Jones. To one of his younger brethren, who had accused himself of some shortcoming with regard to his way of saying the Rosary, the amiable Saint took the trouble of giving the following counsel, and his penitent took the trouble of at once writing it down exactly : ' I had occasion to write largely to Father Etheredge of the English Province, and I told him that I had never ceased to be grateful for a warning he gave me when I was ordained priest. " Up to this," he said, " the Rosary was imposed on you as an obligation for various intentions, but now all that is satisfied for superabundantly by the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and you will be tempted sometimes to be careless about saying the Rosary. Take great pains not to yield to the temptation." ' '*

Another passage concerning the Rosary, and we must have done, howsoever reluctantly, with the author's musings on this inexhaustible and ever-new subject :

" Before beginning to say their Rosary in private some make use of this little rhyme to stir up their fervour :

" Mother ! now I'll say my beads,
For my soul some comfort needs ;
And what better can there be
Than to raise our hearts to thee,
Sweet Mother ?"

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"But sometimes it might be more effective to remind ourselves of the good company we are entering, how many souls very dear to God are at that moment employed as we are—good, humble folk, such as I have just referred to, or nuns kneeling before the altar of their convent chapel, or pacing slowly the convent alleys with beads in hand and heart in Heaven. With these and with all who are similarly engaged in every corner of the Church all the world over, let us join our hearts when we set about saying the Rosary."*

I am sincerely afraid to look at the numerous other passages I have marked for quotation in this consoling book, because we must go on to the second work from the same untiring pen, "Little Angels." Yet if a final brief excerpt from "Behold Thy Mother!" be given the transition will be made more easily. Father Russell points out that each one of us has *three* mothers: The human mother, who brought us into this world; our holy mother the Church; and the Immaculate Mother bequeathed to each no less than to all of us from the Cross. Then follows this charming anecdote:

"Our three mothers were certainly linked together in the heart of that little Protestant girl of whom I heard many years since. 'At present,' she said, 'I must go to the Protestant Church on Sundays with my father; but when I grow up I will become a Catholic, for I want to belong to that Church that will make me pray to the Blessed Virgin, and pray for my mother who is gone.'"[†]

And now let us come to the second radiant book

* P. 104.

† P. 7.

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of an author who has materially passed the "allotted span" of years set down in Holy Writ, and whose work is not yet done.

One of the softest-hearted men of letters that ever passed with the outside world (like Thackeray) for a cynic, consoled me once in early days when a secular editor had given me far too many books to deal with in a page and a half of minor reviews. "No fellow could do it in a month without knowing the recipe," he said. "If Mr. — wants your three columns ready for the printer in eight hours, you *must* work according to formula. Read the preface and first chapter of each of those things on your desk, praise or damn as then seems right, and support your verdict with a well-picked sentence or two from your author."

While reading short reviews in the newspaper press I have often had reason to wonder if my friend's advice were as jealously guarded a "trade secret" as it appeared at the time. So monotonously is the "prescription" followed, indeed, by some British Catholic reviewers of even big books that I must make protest that I have read "Little Angels" twice over from start to finish. Those "mourning mothers" for whom it is written as a "book of comfort" will read it much more frequently. Yet even they will find little in it more beautiful than the short *first* chapter, "The Heart of Rachel," which I must set down in full, amid (and in spite of) the tolerant smiles of hustled reviewers, and of others who know the "formula." It is necessary so to do, for this strong chapter in a sense is the book before us :

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“ Children who die early and go back to God soon—we call them little angels. They have gained much at small cost. They are happy, and they have never been sad. God was beforehand with them, forestalled all rivalry, hardly gave them the chance of rejecting His entreaty: ‘ Child, give Me thy heart.’ The Heart of Jesus drew their little hearts to Itself eagerly, quickly, at once and for ever. It is well with them. Yet the mothers of these little angels grieve too much sometimes that their darlings’ happiness and security have begun so soon; and Jesus forgives to the mother’s heart this selfishness. The Heart of Jesus is the tenderest and kindest of hearts, entering into all griefs, and knowing every throb of each heart and the cure for every pang. Best of all, It knows and understands the heart of a mother. If Rachel, ‘ bewailing her children, and refusing to be comforted because they were not ’ (Jer. xxxi. 15), could have turned in her sorrow to the Heart of Jesus, she would have heard the soothing words spoken to the widow of Naim, ‘ Weep not,’ and Jesus would have smiled upon her with the gentle reproof, ‘ Suffer the little children to come to Me, and hinder them not ’ (Mark x. 14), and her tears would have been dried up, and her heart consoled; and, if the perfect completion of the miracle of Naim must be deferred to Heaven, where, indeed, Jesus will again ‘ restore the child to its mother ’ (Luke vii. 15), at least the pious hope and the longing for that sure meeting in Heaven would solace the mother in her loneliness, and her sorrow would grow so tranquil, and so bright and holy, that she ‘ would rather wish it more than less.’ As the Heart of

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Jesus is the school of all virtue, and the source of all strength, so is It also the healing of every wound and the solace of every sorrow.

“ Jesus, Son of the Mother of Sorrows, Spouse of afflicted souls, comfort the poor afflicted mothers sorrowing after their children taken from their arms too soon. Show them thy Heart, O Jesus, and show them their little ones nestling in It, and cherished there with love far beyond a mother's love. And if Thou who sufferest not to pass unheeded or unrewarded one cup of water given in Thy name, or one kind word spoken in Thy name, canst deign to bless such kind but foolish words, bless them ! Bless these thoughts of many hearts which as a garland of snowdrops and lilies I lay on the grave of one of Thy Little Angels, and which, if they were not too mean and poor in their newest freshness, and if they have not already lost whatever faint scent or colour may once have glistened on their leaves, or lurked in their hearts, if they can still be in their little measure worth offering, my heart would fain offer them to the heart of Rachel, and through her to Thee, O Sacred Heart of Jesus !”*

In a hundred pages that follow, and, indeed, throughout all this winsome book, Father Russell develops the above text, which one is tempted to call the Christian Magna Charta of mourning motherhood. Not only is the best English literature laid under contribution to enforce or illustrate a point, or to awaken interest in the languid and sorrow-stricken, but French (with its tender dialect of Provençal), Italian, German, as well as Latin, the

* “ Little Angels,” pp. 1-3.

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great mother-tongue of the Church, are all pressed into service with a featness of touch that makes them ready volunteers. We understand them, for Father Russell stands by as our kind interpreter when one or the other of his allies chances not to "speak to every man in his own tongue the wonderful works of God." Nor does he stickle at the beautiful work of several who are not in visible communion with the Church. The wise priest knows that everything which is good in so far forth is Catholic. And the best child-poetry (to repeat a clumsy if convenient word I had to coin as the title of one of these essays*) is always Catholic, for it springs from the purest depths of that human soul which Tertullian has called with such daring accuracy *anima naturaliter Christiana*.

Yet, to labour the point a little, in all this child-anthology, culled from the fairest gardens of the Old World and the New, Father Russell never once loses sight of his "text," as we have called it, but cleaves to it with the steadfastness that makes for solidity of doctrine no less than for that consolation which God of old did not disdain to send Agar, the bondwoman, by the mouth of an angel. One example must suffice :

"The baptized child is sometimes ushered into everlasting life after drawing only a few breaths of this mortal life to which some of us cling so tenaciously. This is one of the most pathetic of the relations that bind together a household of souls—brother and sister, parent and child—the relation,

* Father Atkinson is represented by a fine poem in "Little Angels."

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namely, between the mother who is left and the child that is gone to God. Sometimes it is the other way : sometimes God takes the mother, and leaves the little babe of a few hours or days to fight the battle of life. But the pathos of this situation is for the onlookers, not for the one immediately concerned. It will be many a long year before the survivor can understand, if he ever come to understand, the misfortune with which his life has begun. He cannot remember what he never knew. But it is very different with the mother whose infant left this world an infant. The mother's heart never forgets. . . . The Mother of Sorrows is the Consoler of the Afflicted, and among all the afflicted, surely poor human mothers have a special claim to be comforted by Her who stood beside the Cross of her Son.”*

* * * * *

We end where we began, with the name and the power of Our Lady, the Mother of Sorrows. While I was putting these pages together a tiny child passed beneath this window, lightly laden with small purchases from the village, half a mile distant. A band of bored urchins (there is as little true recreation as religion provided for the children of the poor in England) pounced down upon the little maid, to tease her—perhaps to filch something edible from her arms. After a brief, but nimble and successful struggle, she raised her voice, and called aloud : “ I’ll tell my mother.” A latch clicked audibly down the lane, within easy stone-throw of where I write. The imps reviled the child and her

* Pp. 101, 103.

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mother, but they fled from her forthwith, and very swiftly. She went home in peace.

Somehow the incident gives one a parable from real life that links the two good books we have been endeavouring to examine. We are all of us children on earth—just “exiled children,” as we sing in the *Salve Regina*. If we cry lustily upon our Mother in Heaven we shall be heard, and our spiritual foes reduced to impish impotence. And if our voices be hoarse in the traffic of this world’s market-place, we shall be heard all the better if one of our own “little angels” be now playing with the hem of Mary’s mantle, and ever appealing, in ringing and incessant treble, for the needs of mother and father, and all other dear ones left on earth.

Yet the tears we shed for the earthly loss of these innocents are not forbidden. Nay, they are condoned and commended by the example of our Divine Model, who wept at the tomb of Lazarus, His friend, so that the whisper ran through the crowd: “See how He loved him.”

AN EPILOGUE*

It is a far cry, in miles and in years, from the college lawn where I used to see the great Cardinal pacing to and fro. We smaller boys wondered at the long, noiseless steps, I remember. "His Eminence has the desert stride," said one chubby enthusiast, full of tales about Bedouins, caravans, and the like.

Well, I was whirled thither, over the hills and through the years, this morning. The inside of a book will often do as much. With me it was the outside. "Sermons by Archbishop Manning, One Shilling and Sixpence"—so ran the big label on a tall, shabby book outside a bookseller's near the Strand. I was back at St. So-and-so's in a flash, and bought the book mechanically, as it were, for auld lang syne. No, for better, I trust: for love

* This "after-word" is what such things so often are—*i.e.*, an after-thought. When sending the foregoing pages to the printer, the author found, by a chance reference to the calendar, that he was doing so on the anniversary of Cardinal Manning's birth. It is simple truth to say (though it were impertinently autobiographical to detail) that, had the holy prelate never been born into the world, this book (with many another by far abler students whom the "poor man's Cardinal" befriended) could never have been written. It seems right to put the paper in.

AN EPILOGUE

of the great Englishman who loved Ireland and her sons so dearly.

* * * * *

I find that my bargain is worth ten times what I gave for it. The label says "Archbishop Manning." The title-page has "Archdeacon," and bears the original date of 1842—fifteen years before the warrior of the Vatican Council was ordained a Catholic priest. This makes all the difference to the collector.

A windfall? Yes, but much more. The black days of poverty when the great prelate—the "poor man's Cardinal," as the London Irish called him—was generous to me in my need are past and gone. I hope never to be compelled to sell this book, written by him in his Chichester days, when he was thirty-four years old, and one of the handsomest and holiest men in the Church of England. Yet it is as though the brown, warm hand which I have knelt to kiss I know not how oft had reached me a piece of gold from beyond the tomb. And it has churned up fragrant old memories of an all too brief personal association with the great man. Let me set forth just a couple, slight though they be, if only to brush from the brain the fast-fading annoyance of that dreadful biography—the work of a Boswell who disliked his Johnson.

* * * * *

My memories go back much farther than the ill-fated Irish Exhibition held in London during the later eighties. But let my first story strike an Irish note, though it be told out of sequence.

The League of the Cross Festival was being held at

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the Crystal Palace, and I was standing with a priest friend and a group of clerics near the Cardinal. He had just reviewed and blessed the "march-past" of the Cardinal's Guards and League branches, with their bands—in those days an imposing and inspiring sight. Some distinguished visitors were being presented to him by one of his Canons.

Suddenly there was a little commotion on the outskirts of the group. A word of explanation, in pronounced brogue, came from the cause of it, and the clergy made room for him. It was Hogan, the blind piper from the Irish Exhibition in Kensington, led by a youth, and bearing his pipes on his arm. "I want to play before Carr'nal Manning," he said, "an' the Committee have sent me." Who could gainsay so winning a request? No one—least of all the Cardinal himself, gazing full upon Hogan's strangely beautiful and spiritual face.

So there they stood—the Prince of the Church and the piper. Hogan knelt for His Eminence's blessing, and received it. Then he insisted that the Cardinal should "call the tune." The Cardinal wished to leave the choice to him, but he was reverently obdurate. "It was not for the likes of him," he said, "it was for His Eminence to choose." So we pricked up our ears. What air would the Cardinal select on what was like to be a red-letter day of the piper's life?

"Play me 'Let Erin remember,'" he said at length—rather sadly, some thought. Then, in his measured tones, he added: "That melody has ever seemed to me to hold all Ireland's pathetic history in it. It is more characteristic than 'God Save

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Ireland,' and should, to my mind, replace the more stirring tune as the Irish national anthem."

So the piper played, and the Prince beat time very gently to the music ; then another blessing, and a few private words which none strove to overhear, and Hogan was led away, a happy man.

* * * * *

My bargain gives a cue to summon the second picture on the mind's retina.

" To the Right Reverend Father in God, George, Lord Bishop of New Jersey, in remembrance of the day spent with the clergy assembled in visitation at Storrington, July 13th, 1841." Thus the opening sentence of Archdeacon Manning's dedication. Little did he know then that half a long century later he would be buried as Cardinal, and Archbishop of Westminster, " by the grace of God and of the Apostolic See "—with all Ireland in London turned out bareheaded along the bleak streets to do him reverence. They distributed thousands of handbills that cold day, at his Vicar-Capitular's request, to beg that no hats might be removed, for the influenza was ravaging London. I rode at the head of the cortège in the mourning-coach numbered " One," as acolyte, with another, and the cross-bearer and thurifer. Of the thousands upon thousands whom we passed, both within and without the household of the faith, not one obeyed the kindly order. All were bareheaded, from the Oratory to Kensal Green.

One poor Irishwoman was standing towards the centre of the track cleared by the police. She was saying her rosary and weeping. Our cross-bearer,

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who by some mischance at the Oratory had had no food since his breakfast at about eight o'clock that morning—it was then half-past three in the afternoon—took a piece of cake from his cassock pocket, and began to eat, smiling at the rest of us, half in apology, half with defiance.

Just then, as evil hap would have it, we slowly drew abreast of the poor woman who had been left outside the cordon to pray and weep alone. Her face was worn and white, and very beautiful in its tears. I noticed how large the beads were as they passed through her rough, firm fingers—the large beads loved by the Irish poor. Then she raised her eyes reverently, saw through the window our laughter and that foolish handful of food, and started back into the crowd with horror on her face, as though she had been struck a crushing blow.

An ugly memory and a trivial one. But it is the small things that abide in times of great grief, as, according to soldiers, in hours of fear. And I had stood by my own father's open grave the very day before, and was now burying one who had become a second father to me.

As I have said, only the small things stand out when sorrow benumbs and stuns. Thus, I remember with strange distinctness how, in the half-light of the shelter erected over the tomb, I lowered my candle that the Bishop of Clifton might see to read the words of committal; how the undertaker's men were lowering the long coffin without removing the Cardinal's hat, and the master of ceremonies asked me to hand it to him; how I tried and failed, and gave an order, and the coffin was suddenly drawn up

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again, striking me heavily in the breast as the hat was lifted from off the lid.

These minutiae stand out. The rest I must recall with some effort—the thinly-clad stokers from the gas-works in the Harrow Road hurrying into the dangerous cold from their blazing toil, and leaning head down on their shovels, like soldiers on their rifles, as the funeral went by; the crowds; the silence; the prayer; the great requiem in the Oratory; the abiding sense of the loss of a mighty one in Israel.

* * * * *

I had meant to add something of more personal and intimate intercourse. But this is all humorous as well as kindly, and I feel that now it would be out of keeping. For the Cardinal was ever playful with the boys and young men whom he loved to gather round him. Some day, in another mood, I may write of this, and especially of another adventure of the poor cake-eating cross-bearer, who, as it happened, played Hercules to my Dionysus in the "Frogs" some years before the event described, with the Cardinal in the front row of the improvised "stalls" at college. His antics then made His Eminence laugh, if later on they made a working woman grieve.

* * * * *

Back to the bargain that has evoked these random thoughts. This Archdeacon of Chichester, when he had become "Cardinal-Priest of the Holy Roman Church, of the title of St. Andrew and St. Gregory on the Cœlian Hill," was wont to advise his students to read everything with "*intention and attention*"

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—a slight inflection, incommunicable on paper, marking the vital first syllables.

So shall these sermons be read. When the Cardinal wrote them, he was fishing entirely in the stream of Catholic thought. And they are wonderful. Let one example suffice.

Turning over the nobly-printed sheets—pages were not *cramped* in the forties—I find the following. It seems little less than prophetic of the holy Arch-deacon's vocation :

“ Follow His drawings with a free and willing heart. Though restless and perplexed at first, yield to His mysterious will, even as Peter, who first strove with Him, and then said, ‘ Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.’ Wait for the end. Men mar their whole destiny in life by prescribing to God’s providence. They either thwart it by outrunning it, or hinder it by hanging back. What we are to be He has determined, and in due time will reveal it. Your place, your crown, your ministry, in His unseen kingdom, are all marked out for you. He is drawing you towards your everlasting portion. At that day, when He shall have brought unto Mount Sion the last of His redeemed flock, and every lost sheep shall ‘ pass under the hand of him that telleth them,’ when the mystical number shall be full, and all the saints of God, from Abel the righteous to the last that shall be quick on earth at His coming, shall be gathered round the Lamb that was slain, then shall we know what He is now doing with us under a veil and in silence. We shall no more follow Him unseen, but behold Him face to face.”

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This is from the nineteenth sermon of the collection, entitled "The Hidden Power of Christ's Passion," and preached from the prophetic text in St. John's Gospel (xii. 32) : "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me."

Henry Edward Manning, Archdeacon of Chichester, was so drawn, and drew many another. What wonder if, in the crowded Catholic life that followed, he never made leisure to couch his sermons in the majestic English which fills every page of this tall, worn book. He was content to build a more abiding monument. Ere the times were ripe for the erection of the great fane at Westminster, he said repeatedly to his clergy : "I will build a cathedral in the hearts of my people." *Sic dixit, sic fecit.*

THE END

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